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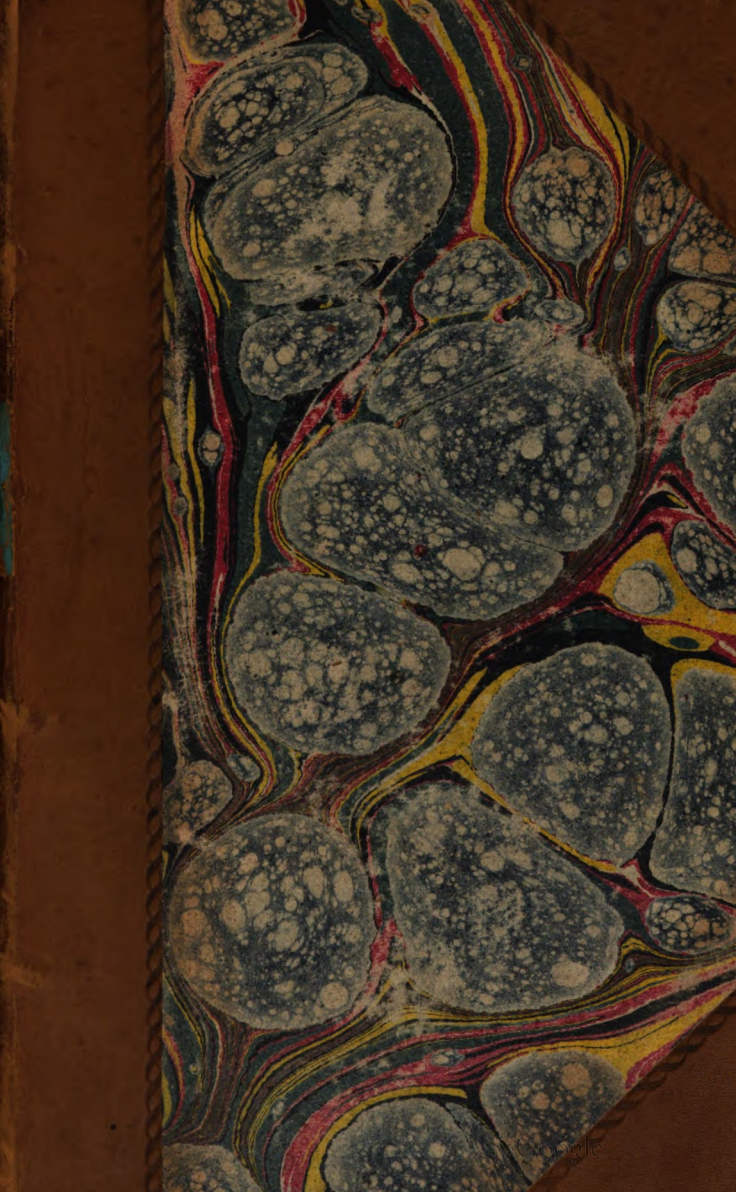

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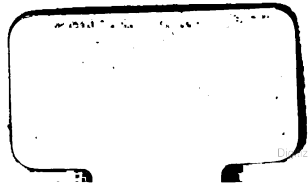

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MY MOTHER'S STORIES.

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He was on horseback and attended by an intelligent looking animal.

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MY

MOTHER'S STORIES;

OR,

TRADITIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS.

BY

ESTHER COPLEY.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR HOULSTON AND CO.
65, Paternoster-Row.

1838.

57.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

MOST young persons who have enjoyed the distinguishing privilege of growing up into life under the fostering care of a judicious mother, and by whom that privilege has been duly appreciated, have their memories stored not only with precepts and sentiments, but also with practical illustrations drawn from the treasures of her conversation; and their own advice and admonitions to their children are often prefaced or corroborated by a reference to this kind of traditionary lore.

It is thus that a "Mother's Stories" have been collected and handed down.

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While recollecting the sentiments thus impressed, and the principles thus established in her own mind in early youth, the writer is encouraged to present these simple records to other young people besides those of her own family, and indulges the hope that they will not be found altogether destitute either of interest or instruction.

Oxford, July 13, 1838.

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THE ORPHANS.

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THE ORPHANS.

MR. LASCELLES, the head of an extensive mercantile establishment, was a man widely known and universally respected. His character for integrity, honour, and sound judgment, stood so high, that he was frequently appealed to as a referee or arbitrator in cases of difficulty or dispute; and such was his wisdom and impartiality, that he generally effected an amicable arrangement, and obtained, as he deserved, the approbation and gratitude of both parties. Tradesmen struggling with difficulties often came to him for advice and assistance, and in several instances they

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were enabled safely to steer through the perplexity, and weather the storm, and afterwards proceeded prosperously.

Among the various causes, public and private, intrusted to this worthy and benevolent man, he was frequently called upon to sustain the offices of executor or trustee; and many a widow and orphan can attest the wisdom, fidelity, disinterestedness, and generosity, with which he discharged his trust.

Within the course of a year or two, Mr. Lascelles was left executor to three of his friends, each of whom left an orphan child, and affairs either in a very scanty or a very intricate condition. In one instance, a boy of six or seven years old stood possessed of large property, descending to him from his maternal grand-parents, his mother being dead. There was also considerable property left by the father, but in such a confused state, as to occasion to the executor years of labour to rectify and secure.

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He toiled on for the interests of his ward with indefatigable perseverance: the loudest complaint he was ever known to utter being "Sol la mi fa sol; if poor B—— had but kept his accounts regularly, this difficulty would never have arisen, but all would have been straight forward."

He succeeded ultimately in extricating the affairs from the confusion in which he found them; and having given the young gentleman a liberal education suitable to his prospects in life, and so husbanded the surplus of each year's income, as greatly to increase the principal, on his coming of age put him in possession of a sum not less than £40,000; having also done his utmost to qualify him for the right enjoyment and improvement of it.

The father of Louisa was a clerk in one of the public offices. His income had not been liberal, but he had the prospect of rising. However, by strict frugality and willing industry on the part of his wife as well as himself, they had managed to live

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in respectability and comfort, and even to spare a yearly sum, in order to secure a small provision for his family in case of his death. A fellow-clerk in the same office, and at the same salary, often calculated upon their promotion, which was sure to take place on the removal of two senior clerks in the establishment, who, as he often observed, could not live for ever, and might shortly be pensioned off, "and then," said he, "*we* shall be able to enjoy life a little, and to make provision for our families."

It was well for Walker and those dependent on him, that he had not suspended the provision on any such uncertain contingency. Before the old clerks either died or were pensioned off, both the juniors were carried off by an epidemic fever. Smart, who, fostering vain expectations, had exceeded his income, left his family plunged in destitution and debt. The provision which Walker had made, was indeed very slender, yet it was a

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support to his mind to know that his widow would not be left altogether destitute, and to believe, also, that she possessed energy, aptitude, and perseverance, to turn it to the best account, and by adding her own exertions to make it enough. He was chiefly anxious (as far as temporal affairs were concerned) to secure for her the counsel and protection of a wise and faithful friend. He had reason to know that both himself and his wife were highly respected by Mr. Lascelles; and although that gentleman moved in a very superior rank in life, he was encouraged from his well-known benevolence, to hope that he would become the friend of his widow and fatherless child. His consent to undertake the charge, afforded great satisfaction to the dying man.

Soon after the death of her husband, through the interest of her kind friend, Mrs. Walker obtained a situation as matron to a public institution, hoping that the salary, besides supplying her own

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moderate wants, would, together with the interest of the money received on the death of her husband, enable her to clothe her little girl, and place her at a respectable school, with a view to her being qualified for the work of tuition.

The two daughters of Mr. Lascelles were at this time receiving their education at a school of considerable celebrity, and there it was proposed to place his two female wards as half-boarders.

The mother of Elizabeth had been dead some years. Her father, though in a good way of business, had been irregular and improvident. He, however, flattered himself that he left a good provision for his little girl; but when the affairs came to be investigated, it proved that there was little more than sufficient to pay the creditors, and even that some years must elapse before all could be wound up.

The generous Mr. Lascelles immediately resolved at his own expence to give both these children such an education as should

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qualify them to gain their own maintenance. He, however, forbore to mention his intention, and managed the affairs of both with the most scrupulous care, as though he expected to gather from them the needful resources.

The mother of Louisa, though little aware of the extent of her benefactor's liberal intentions, yet felt truly grateful for his kindness, and constantly endeavoured to impress similar sentiments on the mind of her child. "To him I am indebted," she would say, "for my present comfortable situation: but for his kind advice and interest I might have frittered away my little property in unsuccessful attempts to increase it; but here I am at a certainty, as long as I am able to discharge the duties of my situation, while my principal remains undiminished. To his kindness too we owe it, that you, my child, are placed in so superior an establishment; for the terms would never have been brought within my reach, but for the respect in

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which your governess holds our benefactor. I hope and trust we shall prove worthy of the kindness he has shewn us."

Every quarter, on receiving her salary, Mrs. Walker punctually repaired to Mr. Lascelles, and offered to make up the amount which Louisa's schooling exceeded the interest of her little stock; but Mr. Lascelles as uniformly declined taking it, desiring her to purchase with it such clothing as might be needed by herself and her daughter.

Very different were the sentiments instilled into the mind of Elizabeth by a sister of her father's,—a proud, selfish, and perhaps designing woman. It was an extreme mortification to her that her niece should be placed as half-boarder in a school where the Miss Lascelles were parlour-boarders: she was continually filling the mind of Elizabeth with discontented suggestions on this subject. "Why should she be so degraded? she was as good as the Miss Lascelles any day; and, no doubt, her fa-

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ther left plenty of property to give her the best of education. It could be nothing but pride and envy in Mr. Lascelles that he would not see her on a level with his own daughters, but would degrade her to an equality with poor little Walker, whose mother gets her living by taking care of paupers."

Poor ignorant woman! She was incapable of estimating the obligations of her niece to her generous guardian; and she knew not the superior worth and respectability of Mrs. Walker to herself, or of the prospects of Louisa to those of Elizabeth. Her insinuations, however, operated on the mind of the child so as to render her extravagant in her desires for fine clothes; discontented with her situation; unconcerned to improve her advantages; rebellious against her governess; haughty and disdainful in her conduct towards the Miss Lascelles; and overbearing and contemptuous towards Louisa: in a word, she became a very disagreeable girl.

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Louisa, on the contrary, was distinguished by ingenuous simplicity and sweetness of disposition. She really regarded those around her as her friends: she was sensible of her advantages, and endeavoured to improve them to the utmost; conscious that on her present improvement would, in a great measure, depend her future support, and her ability to assist her beloved mother. She was sensible of her obligations, and desirous in every proper way to express her gratitude. She endeavoured to render herself as useful as possible to her governess, and to promote the comfort and gratification of her young companions. She was amiable, and hence she was beloved.

On one occasion, she had an opportunity of shewing her gratitude and attachment, which greatly endeared her to her guardian and his family. The eldest Miss Lascelles was taken ill; and as it was the opinion of the medical attendant that she was sickening for the small-pox, she was immediately

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removed from her companions, to a cottage on the premises, but at a distance from the house and play-ground. Louisa, having had the disorder, entreated permission to accompany her young friend, and minister to her comforts. Two or three days afterwards, Elizabeth also sickened, and was brought to the infirmary, as it was called. Louisa was assiduous and indefatigable in her attentions to both invalids. She acted from principle, and she felt that gratitude to her benefactor, still more than personal attachment, claimed her exertions. Hence, though she could not but feel a preference towards one who had treated her with uniform kindness, she was enabled to forget all the unkindness and insults she had received from Elizabeth, and regarding her only as the ward of her guardian, and in circumstances of affliction, with equal cheerfulness and tenderness she endeavoured to alleviate her sufferings and to promote her comforts. Elizabeth felt some compunctious visitings

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of conscience, on account of the unmerited dislike and unkindness with which she had always treated Louisa, and something like admiration and gratitude at her generous returns of good for evil. She resolved that in future she would *condescend* to be more kind and friendly to her. Her resolves, however, were not based upon right principles; and, on her recovery, an interview or two with her aunt put to flight all her good intentions, and confirmed her in her former pride and self-preference.

Both the young ladies passed the disease favourably; and, happily, it spread no further. It was, however, considered adviseable, that neither the invalids, nor those who had attended them, should join the society till after the vacation, which was not far distant. Accordingly, the carriage of Mr. Lascelles was sent for his daughter and his two wards; the younger Miss Lascelles being left to accompany her governess to town at the close of the half-year.

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And now the different principles and dispositions of these two girls became strikingly manifest to all the family. Elizabeth, it was evident, fancied herself a personage of consequence, a young lady of high expectations. Not at all sensible of her obligations, and fostered by her foolish aunt in pride and selfishness, she treated Mrs. Lascelles with cold haughtiness or with impertinent familiarity. Over the young people she assumed with domineering airs; and ordered the servants about in a way to which they were little accustomed. By her indolence in the morning, and her irregularity through the day, she continually interrupted family arrangements; and resented the gentlest remonstrance on the part of Mrs. Lascelles. The family residence was in a village in the environs of London. Owing to Mr. Lascelles being constantly absent on business through the day, he saw very little of the conduct of his wards; and Mrs. Lascelles was of too kind and forbearing a disposition to say

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one word that might operate to the disadvantage of a poor orphan: but, excepting Mr. Lascelles, there was not an individual in the house by whom Elizabeth was not thoroughly disliked. It was far otherwise with Louisa. With instinctive propriety and delicacy, she avoided giving trouble to any one, and endeavoured in every possible way to render herself useful in the family of her benefactor. While Elizabeth could scarcely be prevailed on to rise in time for breakfast, Louisa had been up some hours; had made her own bed, and assisted the young ladies to dress; or had taken the little ones for a walk, or been engaged in needlework for Mrs. Lascelles: and in so doing, while thinking nothing about herself, she had secured to herself the esteem and affection of all around her.

Years rolled on. The eldest Miss Lascelles left school, and the period for which Elizabeth and Louisa were articled was drawing to a close. A vacancy was likely

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to occur, and Mrs. R—— proposed engaging Louisa as an assistant. Mr. Lascelles enquired if she had also a vacancy for Elizabeth. She said she had not: nor could she in her heart wish to retain her in her establishment; yet, from respect to Mr. Lascelles she consented to her remaining another year on the same terms as before; hoping that in the mean time she might qualify herself for some other situation, and that an opening might present itself.

This arrangement by no means coincided with the views of the young lady and her aunt, who, in a very insolent manner demanded of Mr. Lascelles the amount of her niece's fortune, as she had contemplated, when her education was finished, removing her abode, and taking her niece to live with her. With no small consternation and dismay she received the intelligence that the winding up of her brother's affairs had left no provision even for the education of his daughter, and that

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she must depend on her own exertions for future support. Such intimations had been frequently made to Elizabeth herself, and had been pressed upon her as motives to diligent improvement of her present advantages, and to moderation in her notions and desires as to dress and expenditure: but they had not at all fallen in with her inclinations and feelings; she had therefore dismissed them as unwelcome intruders, and flattered herself, that things would in some way or other turn out better than her guardian expected. But now, from the serious and emphatic manner of Mr. Lascelles, both aunt and niece were compelled to believe the unwelcome truth; and their lofty dreams gave way to useless lamentations, not unmingled, on the part of the elder Miss F——, with insinuations that her poor brother's property could not have been made the best of, and that it was generally the lot of poor friendless orphans to be oppressed and plundered. Happily, Mr. Lascelles knew

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how to "do good hoping for nothing again," or such ingratitude and baseness would have driven him to lay aside his benevolent idea of sustaining the whole expence of Elizabeth's maintenance and education, and leaving the little pittance rescued by his persevering exertions from the wreck of her father's property, to accumulate for her future benefit. But he was not weary in well-doing. He pursued his benevolent course sustained by the vigorous exercise of that charity "which suffereth long and is kind, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

During the last year of Elizabeth's residence with Mrs. R——, she enjoyed some additional advantages with respect to masters. The amiable Louisa also made many efforts for her improvement; but whether from indolence, or whether from a haughty disdain of being benefited by one whom she could not forgive for having risen above her, she certainly did

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not improve to the extent that might have been expected. She was now nineteen years of age. On leaving Mrs. R——, she engaged herself as governess to two little girls. Even then, she might have succeeded, if her humility and desire of improvement had but been equal to her deficiencies. But her haughty consequential airs rendered her useless to the children and disagreeable to the parents, and a few short months found her again seeking for a situation. She was engaged as under teacher in a ladies' school.

The idea of any subordinate station, was to her most galling and mortifying; but her own carelessness and indifference to improvement had precluded her from a higher one. Her haughtiness and ill temper rendered her sufficiently disagreeable to the pupils; but it happened that she agreed pretty well with, or as she called it, formed an ardent attachment for, another of the teachers; and as it was an establishment in which the superior

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paid but little personal attention, they contrived together to conceal each other's defects, and all passed on smoothly. Her kind friend and guardian hoped favourably of her, and she was invited to pass the vacation at his country house. She was now twenty-one.

During her visit, the wealthy youth who has already been mentioned as a ward of Mr. Lascelles, came to spend a few days with the family. He was not more than seventeen or eighteen, and very boyish and simple of his age; but the ambitious Elizabeth, prompted, it was believed, or at least encouraged by her aunt, formed an artful scheme for drawing him into a clandestine attachment. It was happily discovered before it was too late to rescue the youth from her toils, and she was immediately dismissed from the family of her generous guardian, who, notwithstanding her having so completely forfeited all claim on his friendship, fulfilled his benevolent purpose, and presented her

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with the little accumulated store, which she supposed had been spent on her maintenance and education. Mr. Lascelles, however, declined all further communication with her. The sequel of her history is not known.

As to Louisa, she soon became principal teacher in the school; and, as Mrs. R—— found her health and strength failing, was advanced to a partnership, and ultimately succeeded to the whole concern. When she was somewhat more than thirty, a gentleman of property, who had three daughters at the school, formed an attachment for her, and married her. Towards the comforts of her mother she had long contributed; and having now arrived at that period of life when repose and quietude are desirable, it was the daughter's wish that she might be enabled to retire from the situation which she had long filled with credit to herself, and with advantage to the institution.

Louisa disposed of the school to some

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advantage, and then consulted her judicious and now aged friend Mr. Lascelles, as to the best mode of investing that sum for her mother's benefit, hoping, that, with the original little principal, it might purchase a sufficient annuity to secure a comfortable provision for her declining days. Then it was that she was made aware of the extent of her guardian's generous kindness; that the income which both she and her mother supposed had been expended on her education, had been suffered to accumulate, and that the interest of the whole would afford a sufficient maintenance for her mother without sinking the principal. The good woman lived to extreme old age, having every want and comfort liberally supplied, and happy in witnessing the prosperity and happiness of her beloved daughter.

It is an interesting fact, that, in course of years, some of the younger branches of Mr. Lascelles's family, to whom Louisa Walker was scarcely known, having ex-

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perienced painful reverses in fortune, were sought out and assisted by one who had not forgotten the obligations of her childhood, and who spoke of it as one of the highest pleasures resulting from her prosperous circumstances, to have been permitted in any degree to requite, in the persons of his children, her early benefactor.

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MAIDEN LADIES.

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MAIDEN LADIES.

AMONG the many mistakes of youth, is the very common idea, that it is essential to their respectability and happiness that they should marry, or that unmarried females are necessarily the subjects of ill humour and spleen, and the fit objects of contempt and ridicule. It would be easy to adduce proofs that it does not invariably happen, that persons remain single because they are not worth having, or because they have never had an opportunity of changing their condition, had they chosen to do so; or that they are necessarily morose, fidgety, disagreeable, and

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useless beings in society. However sceptical the young reader, it might be possible to convince her, that there really are such beings as unmarried ladies, who are cheerful, amiable, useful, and respectable. Reference might be made to Hannah More and her sisters, to Elizabeth Carter, Elizabeth Hamilton, Maria Edgeworth, and many others, whose names are not more brightly blazoned on the records of fame, than their private virtues are deeply engraven in the hearts of the privileged circle in which they moved or still move.

The common mistake above alluded to, has led many persons to form very undesirable connexions, from the sheer dread of living unmarried. A most irrational course, and one in which the remedy is worse than the disease; for surely an absence of good might be better borne than a positive evil. Besides, such persons did not consider, when they accepted an offer which they could not in their consciences approve, that they were throwing away a

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better which might be yet in reserve. A pair of sketches may serve to exemplify these sentiments.

A very worthy person having considerably passed the boundary of thirty years, began to be sorely galled at the gibes so ungenerously and cruelly cast on unmarried females of a certain age. She possessed a comfortable little property, and lived neither a solitary nor a useless life. A small business furnished employment for herself and an orphan niece, without harassing anxiety or excessive fatigue. Her house was a picture of neatness and comfort. She was universally respected in the neighbourhood; was a valuable teacher or superintendent in the schools; an active visiter of the sick; and had always her mite at hand to contribute to the support of every good work. But the dead fly in her pot of ointment was the tittering remark of some giddy girl or boy—"It seems as if poor Miss Brookes was forgotten" or "laid on the shelf." "What do you think

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of striking up to Miss Brookes?"—or the sarcastic manner in which some flighty housewife praised the extreme neatness of Miss Brookes's house, adding, "But she has nothing else to do."

There were people foolish and impertinent enough to say these things; and there were others mischievous enough to tell her that they had been said; and Miss Brookes was weak enough to vex herself about it, and to think that it really was a discomfort and disgrace to her, to live as she did. It was as if nobody would have her. So she bought herself a very gay bonnet with artificial flowers, and a thin muslin dress, lace tippet, and lilac silk scarf; and, in short, endeavoured to make herself appear ten or fifteen years younger. Her old steady friends scarcely knew her when they met her thus bedizened, and wondered at the sudden change. The young people laughed and ridiculed, and guessed what it meant. But there was one who perfectly understood

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and determined to take advantage of it: a man of low disgusting habits, one whom Miss Brookes would formerly have considered not fit to touch with tongs, except it had been to render him an office of humanity; and such she would not have withheld from the meanest, vilest wretch on earth, in a suffering condition. This man was generally reported to have been the death of his first wife by his brutal violence and abuse, when he was in a fit of intoxication, and she in delicate health, and in circumstances that required the utmost tenderness. Since her death he had more and more neglected his business, wasted his property, and given himself up to disgraceful courses. It all at once struck him, from the change in Miss Brookes's appearance, that she might easily be won over, that it would not cost him much to reform his habits for a few months, and that a match with her would be just the thing to prop up his sinking prospects. Accordingly, he brushed up

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his clothes, kept himself more clean and decent than he had been for years past, avoided going to the public-house, (at least by daylight,) and even made his appearance at the place of worship which Miss Brookes and her niece attended, and then offered his services to walk home with them. Having done so once or twice, he lingered at the door, until he received an invitation to walk in.

The friends of Miss Brookes perceived her danger, and gently intimated it to her; but Miss Brookes charitably hoped that he was a very altered character, and as to his calling at her house, it was nothing more than civility and good neighbourhood. But it was soon currently reported that Palmer was a constant visiter, and had made serious proposals. Her friends trembled for her; but what could they do? The first gentle hint had been rejected. Miss Brookes sought no advice, perhaps she had a secret misgiving, that the judgment of her wisest and

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best friends would not coincide with her own determination, and she was certainly old enough to judge for herself.

By and by Miss Brookes was out of town for a week or two; a circumstance which had not taken place before for several years, for she always said she could not leave her business. Her niece looked very sadly, and if asked when she expected her aunt home, generally burst into tears, and said she did not exactly know. One evening a post-chaise was observed to stop at the door, and next day, the old board with "A. Brookes's Stationery and Toy Warehouse," was taken down, and shortly afterwards replaced with a dashing new one, on which the name of "Palmer" was substituted.

During her absence a letter had come by the post from a distant relation of hers, a very worthy man, who had formerly lived in the town, but had been ten or twelve years in business in London, where he had been greatly prospered, and was now about

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to take his foreman into partnership, and to settle his residence in a pleasant village, at an easy distance from town.

Before he entered on his new habitation, he wished to visit his native town, and renew his intimacy with the friends of his early days, and especially with his cousin, whom he had always remembered with great regard and affection. In a day or two he arrived. It was evident enough what were his intentions, and that they had been completely frustrated by the step recently taken. His stay was not long; but it was long enough to fill him with benevolent regret, in addition to his own disappointment, that his proposal had not arrived in time to rescue his cousin from falling into the snare of a sot, a fool, and a brute, which he plainly perceived her husband to be. He left without giving his cousins an invitation to visit him.

Poor Mrs. Palmer soon had reason bitterly to repent of her ill-judged step. The mask which was only assumed to serve a

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purpose, was speedily laid aside, and her husband shewed himself in his true colours—intemperate, profane, and abusive; sparing no expence for his own indulgences and gratifications, and extorting from his wife every pound she could get together; or if at any time she hesitated, cruelly upbraiding her with jealous reproachings of want of regard to him, and of preference for his grand London cousin as he called him.

In his fits of abuse Palmer often threatened to turn his wife's niece out of doors, declaring he would not support her. That worthy industrious young woman received no support beyond that to which her services fairly entitled her, and nothing but sympathy for her unhappy aunt induced her to remain so long, especially as she had a respectable and suitable offer of marriage. As things grew worse and worse, poor Mrs. Palmer urged upon her not any longer to hazard or defer her own prospects, in the vain hope of amending

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hers. She felt that she smarted for her own folly, and she would rather bear it alone,—alone she could not, for she had one little boy of three years old, who already shared his mother's unhappiness.

At length things came to such a pitch, that the wretch was scarcely ever sober, nor the life of his wife and child one hour secure from his brutal violence. When Mrs. Palmer was brought to the borders of the grave by distress and hardship, two of her old friends generously interfered, and insisted on rescuing her and her child from the peril in which they were placed. It could only be done by swearing the peace against her husband, obtaining a separation from him, leaving to him the little wreck of her property, and trusting to her own exertions for a maintenance.

Through the interest of her friends, an eligible situation was obtained for her as housekeeper in a gentleman's family, in a distant part, by means of which she is

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enabled to support her child at school; but she is obliged to pass under a feigned name, and to use every precaution to conceal herself from her vile husband, who would otherwise pursue her, and deprive her of her situation, or strip her of the fruits of her industry.

Having consumed upon himself the last shilling of his wife's property, the lazy, drunken wretch, became dependent on parish relief. How he fares under the new poor-laws is not known; but surely the example of Miss Brookes will serve to exemplify the extreme folly of marrying for no better reason than that of avoiding the dreaded possibility of dying unmarried.

Permit me then, my young reader, next to conduct you in imagination to a neat market-town, in ——shire, and there to introduce you to the two Miss Allisons, and their maids Martha and Rebecca.

Should a stranger be passing through the town, and observe at the entrance a hand-

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some well-built house always in substantial repair, and frequently painted, which is distinguishable by the extreme clearness of its windows, the brightness of the brass knocker and name and bell-plates, the delicate whiteness of the door-steps, the neat and tasty arrangement of a small flower-garden in front, in which it might be supposed that the gravel walks had just been rolled, the grass mowed and swept, and the beds weeded the very day he sees it, whatever day in the year that may happen to be; and even the flag-stones outside the palisades bearing such evident marks of recent scouring, that the footsteps of passengers have not been able to efface: *that* he may safely conclude is the dwelling of the Miss Allisons.

Should we approach, and knock or ring, the door will be opened by the younger servant, now about thirty years of age. The extreme neatness of her appearance can scarcely fail to attract attention; not a pin, a hair, or a string is untidy; every

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article of her clothing is good of its kind, and suitable to the season of the year and the time of day; every thing fits nicely, and altogether presents a most becoming appearance; yet there is nothing like an attempt at finery. But let not the neatness of Rebecca engage the whole attention of the visiter, lest she should inadvertently forget to make due use of the scraper and door-mat; which, though no black looks from either mistresses or servants should reprove, would certainly call up a blush on the cheek of the offender the moment she had an opportunity of comparing her shoes with those of the inmates, or with the parlour in which they are seated. There is another danger to be avoided before entering the parlour, it is that of slipping down on the well-rubbed floor-cloth or polished boards; a danger into which some ladies going heedlessly along have fallen, but which may be escaped by proper attention.

The inmates of the mansion will be sure

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to receive you with cheerful frankness and courtesy; but they will probably not consider it essential to politeness entirely to lay aside their occupations. The book, if one of the sisters or their niece was reading aloud, will be replaced in the cheffonier, and the needlework or netting resumed, while all join in intelligent conversation. Possibly the eye of a stranger may be attracted by the dress of the ladies, or by the furniture of the room; not so much by any one striking article, as by the perfect neatness and good taste of the whole, and the absence of every particle of dust and litter. The music-books are neatly arranged, not thrown together carelessly on or under the piano. The work-boxes are beautifully polished without, and in complete order within; there is even a little receptacle for shreds of linen and ends of thread, that both litter and waste may be avoided. Every thing seems to be in its place without any thing like the effort or bustle of setting to rights.

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Cleanliness and order are among the qualities usually ridiculed in "old maids," and the Miss Allisons certainly must plead guilty to the charge of practising them in a very high degree. It is, however, possible that some houses where there are no old maids, would be rendered not at all less comfortable by copying some of their neat and orderly ways. Moreover, although the ladies may not look with perfect complacency on the feats of a rude, ill-managed child, or a petted lap-dog, who should trample with dirty feet on their sofa or hearth-rug; they would not reprove the delinquent in such a tone as would deserve for them the epithet of "cross old maids." With equal kindness and firmness, proper accommodation would be furnished, and suitable amusements offered; which would most likely divert, at least the reasoning animal from his mischievous purpose, and lodge in his mind the reminiscence that the kind ladies who indulge him in so many ways, do not allow such

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and such liberties which he is permitted to take at home, but in all probability at a home destitute of the many gratifications for which abstinence from mischief is the easy price.

Should circumstances make you an inmate of the dwelling for a few days, and admit you to take a peep into its more private recesses, you would find the same neatness, regularity, and order, pervading the whole. From the cellar to the attic there would be found nothing that could bear the disgraceful epithet of a "slut's hole." Every kitchen-utensil, if not in use, would be seen perfectly clean and bright and in its place.

In the provisions of the house, while every thing is conducted on a liberal scale, you would observe the strictest attention to frugality and good management; more so than in many families whose resources are uncertain for the next meal. You would find that at certain hours the clock strikes and the bell rings at the same mo-

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ment, for meals, or for family worship; that all the bed-room windows are invariably opened by eight o'clock in the morning, or earlier, and shut before the damps of evening arise; that all fires and candles are extinguished by eleven o'clock; and that the ringing of the parlour bell is a somewhat unusual occurrence, the regular wants of the inmates being well understood, and attended to with the exactness of clock-work, and extraordinary occasions not very frequently arising.

These, and many other minute particulars, might perhaps call forth from some pert Miss, the contemptuous epithet of "precise old maids;" while the bustling mother of a family might be disposed to smile with pity at their quiet, useless lives, consumed day after day, and year after year, in keeping themselves and their house and garden in order, and to ask whether this is a worthy end of living?

It is often much easier to throw out

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insinuations than to establish facts. All these little matters come into the habits of living of these worthy ladies; but not one of them, nor all together, was ever regarded by them as the end of living: and whether theirs can be justly called a useless life may be gathered from the following sketch of their history.

The father of the Miss Allisons was, for many years, a brewer and banker in the town, where he amassed a considerable fortune. His lady also brought good property into the family. Both possessed highly cultivated minds and amiable dispositions. Property with them was regarded in its true light; not as the medium of pride and luxury, but as the means of acquiring and diffusing knowledge and happiness.

The education of their family engaged their first concern; to that the time of the mother was chiefly devoted; and intercourse with his children formed the most agreeable recreation of the father's hours

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of leisure. Nor was the education imparted merely that of intellect and taste: the heart and affections were also cultivated. One of the earliest lessons inculcated on the children, was that of understanding and respecting the rights of every human being with whom they came in contact. In the example of their parents, they had a picture of consideration and benevolence constantly before their eyes, into the imitation of which they were early initiated. Although surrounded by plenty, they were accustomed to moderation in their own indulgences, and to exercise both industry and frugality, that they might have the more to impart to those in need.

Nor were the parental solicitudes of Mr. and Mrs. Allison on behalf of their children, nor their benevolent concern for those around them, bounded by earth and time. With them, the interests of eternity formed a prominent object of concern and exertion; and little would they have thought it, could they have laid up for their

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children the treasures of the Indies, or could they have relieved all the temporal distresses of their neighbours, and conferred on them every temporal comfort, if they were left destitute of a share in the unsearchable riches of Christ, and ignorant of the way of salvation. The prevalence of such sentiments of course gave a sacred tinge to all their instructions and all their exertions; and their efforts, seconded as they were by a lovely consistency of conduct, were rendered eminently successful both in the nearest and tenderest circle, and in the more widely extended sphere of general benevolence.

Mr. and Mrs. Allison had the happiness of seeing their children, two sons and three daughters, rise up to fulfil their warmest wishes, and to adorn and bless society. Both the sons, and one of the daughters, in early life formed domestic connexions, much to the satisfaction of their parents and to their own happiness; but the other two sisters remain to this day unmarried,

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having now considerably passed the boundary of forty.

Every town has some inhabitants apt at forming conjectures and circulating rumours; and the circumstances and motives of the Miss Allisons have not escaped their busy remarks and surmises. Whether it is in consequence of a mutual vow to spend their days together; or whether from a large property left them by some maiden cousin on that condition; or whether from some early disappointment, or both having thought with tenderness of the same individual:—these, and many other speculations on the subject have been at various times afloat; but the ladies themselves never threw out a single hint that might set the matter at rest; nor could a word on the subject ever be elicited from old Martha, who has lived in the house ever since the ladies were children, though she has been tried in every possible way, direct and indirect, by all who think it incumbent upon them to inform themselves of other

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people's affairs; and people are still in the dark why and wherefore the Miss Allisons, with personal attractions, amiable dispositions, superior accomplishments, and ample property, should choose to remain single. But that it is a matter of choice is certain, as they are positively known to have had several eligible offers both in early and in later life.

On the marriage of his eldest son, Mr. Allison relinquished the brewery, and retired with his family to the residence now occupied by his daughters. The second son had entered into partnership in an extensive mercantile house in London; and one daughter was married to a junior partner in the banking-house of which her father was the head. The family, therefore, for some years, consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Allison and their two remaining daughters. But though a retired, theirs was by no means an inactive life. Besides their various literary pursuits and social engagements, an important part of

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their daily avocations consisted in judicious efforts to meliorate the condition of the poor around them, by stimulating a spirit of intelligence, industry, and good management, by conducing to their domestic comforts, especially in time of sickness, and by promoting the education of their children. Meanwhile, too, employment of a yet more immediately interesting character opened upon the female part of the family, in the growing households of its married branches. The judicious counsel and superintendence of the experienced mother was frequently called into requisition by their domestic circumstances; while the young ladies became valuable assistants to each in turn, as the case required, in housekeeping, needlework, the care of the nursery, the sick-chamber, and in the work of early education. A child from one or other of the families was generally residing with the grand-parents and aunts, and there received the earliest rudiments of instruction.

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On the death of Mr. Allison, the estate was settled on the widow for her life, and in case of her death the preference secured to the two unmarried daughters, or either of them who might remain single. The three ladies therefore continued to occupy it, keeping up the same establishment as before, namely, two elderly maid-servants, a footman, and a gardener, who had lived in the family many years, with a young girl, who, as a reward of good conduct in the school, or in the house of her parents, was admitted for a year to be well trained in household-business under the experienced servants of Mrs. Allison. These girls were generally transferred to the most respectable families in the town; and the good lady was often complimented on her benevolent and useful scheme of keeping a nursery for servants. On the death of one of the old servants, Rebecca, then a young girl in the "nursery," was promoted to her place, which she has now filled fourteen or fifteen

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years with great credit and satisfaction. There are surmises afloat that a match with the footman is likely to deprive the ladies of her services; but nobody has ventured as yet to hint such a thing to the parties immediately concerned. Time alone will disprove or establish the matter.

While Mr. Allison lived, especially during the last year or two, when his health was declining, the time of his daughters was much engaged in accompanying him in his recreations, and promoting his comforts; but on his removal, they found a considerable accession to their stock of leisure, which they desired conscientiously to devote to some useful pursuit. They had two little nieces who had accompanied their parents when they came from London to visit their dying father, and who on account of somewhat delicate health were left for the benefit of country air. These were now of an age to require regular instruction. The two families in

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the town had three of nearly the same age, and the mode of education to be adopted had become matter of serious deliberation with the respective parents. The kind aunts having engaged to devote a regular portion of time to the instruction of the visiting nieces, proposed that, during their stay, their little cousins should join them and partake of those instructions. Thus commenced their engagements in an important occupation, for which they have proved themselves eminently qualified, and to which, though at first they only contemplated the engagement of a few weeks, their best energies were devoted for at least fifteen years. In a word, they have conducted the entire education of the females of three families, and the early part of that of the boys. Yes—they braved the sneers of many tattlers and busybodies in other men's matters, and the insinuation that Mr. Allison had not left his family so well off as was expected, and that the young ladies were obliged to eke

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out their income by keeping school;—and, without feeling themselves at all accountable to the town gossips for their motives, having deliberately counted the cost of such an engagement, they constantly and perseveringly and successfully pursued it; and have now the delightful reward of seeing three amiable and highly accomplished families gratefully acknowledging their obligation to their generous amateur instructors. They have still one or two of their nieces with them in succession, though the professed business of education has closed.

The mother of these amiable ladies was for several years a severe sufferer, and greatly dependent on their affectionate tenderness and assiduity. The time and energies devoted to these acts of filial duty were certainly not misapplied or useless; and they were such as could scarcely have been rendered by a married daughter, however affectionate, on whom devolved the care of a young family. Surely old

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maids are not necessarily contemptible and useless beings.

But the death of this venerated mother, and the maturity of their nieces, have left the Miss Allisons at liberty to widen the circle of their benevolent efforts, and their time and their income are devoted to general good. Every benevolent institution in the town is greatly dependent on their contributions for its funds, and yet more so on their superintendence for its prosperity. They are the constant visiters of the sick-poor, and a great part of old Martha's time is employed in preparing things needful for their comfort. Every article in the house and garden is carefully made the best of, and employed for some purpose of utility. Every ride and walk is rendered subservient to benevolence. The sick or lying-in poor, in the villages around, are visited and relieved, or clothing conveyed to the destitute, or the children collected for instruction, or Bibles and tracts are distributed. "I am glad,"

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said the turnpike-man, "whenever I hear the sound of that little four-wheel carriage, for it is sure to be loaded with something to do good to the bodies or souls of the poor."

The British School is almost a daily object of attention. With these ladies it chiefly originated, and to their countenance and co-operation the governess is in a great measure indebted for her success, and the children for their improvement. In their kitchen, too, the elder girls are initiated into a knowledge of household-business, and fitted for filling respectable situations in service. The Sunday-schools have, for many years, engaged their close and zealous attention; and for the poor and the children who come from a considerable distance to attend public worship and school, every Sunday a cold dinner is provided in their hall. The aged poor receive from them the kindest sympathy, and that delicate attention to their little wants and comforts, for which

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charity of the ordinary kind makes no provision. Orphans, or children whose parents are struggling with a numerous family, have, in several instances, been wholly, or in part, clothed and educated at their expence. Students or ministers with small incomes have received valuable additions to their library. Missionary, and other society, funds have been raised, not merely by their pecuniary contributions, but also by the elegant productions of their taste and ingenuity. It is said, but not generally known, that several useful publications for the young have been produced by the pen of one of these ladies.

It is impossible to enumerate the various ways in which these amiable women may be regarded as public benefactors; for though many of their good actions necessarily come to light, there are doubtless very many more in which they can and do enjoy the delightful secrecy of not letting the left hand know what

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the right hand does. Enough, however, has been said to prove that they are neither despicable nor useless characters, but that they really enjoy and adorn life; and that whenever this life with them shall terminate, that which to them will doubtless prove an unspeakable gain, will be justly regarded as a public loss.

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THE FIRST SERVANT.

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THE FIRST SERVANT.

MUCH of domestic comfort depends on the conduct and management of servants. It is especially important, that the young female just commencing housekeeping should start well in this respect. If she engage a trusty and experienced servant, it will be her duty and her wisdom to treat her with due respect, consideration, and confidence; but at the same time to guard against surrendering the supremacy which is justly and beneficially placed in her own hands. This will be maintained, not by arbitrary and capricious requirements, nor by haughty displays of con-

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sequence, but by a calm and dignified deportment she will make it appear that she knows her own place, and expects the servant to know hers also, and when that is the case, that she is satisfied. She should also be sedulously diligent in observing and acquiring information and experience, that in case of a change, she may be qualified to direct the movements of a successor, who may not prove so expert or so trustworthy.

Eliza, on her marriage, engaged a young servant. Both mistress and servant were inexperienced and thoughtless, and the consumption and destruction of a few months was really alarming. The bills for butcher's meat, poultry, and grocery, exceeded those of the parents on either side, although the family was not half as large; already several articles of the best dinner set were broken by being set down to the cat, or carelessly placed on the edge of a table, or cracked by putting in the hot oven; the damask table-linen was

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discoloured and stained; a silver spoon was missing, supposed to have been thrown down the drain; the polished fire-irons were rusted; and the general aspect of the house and its furniture was that of waste and dilapidation.

At the suggestion of the parents, the young servant was dismissed; for it was feared that Eliza wanted energy as well as experience to correct what was amiss. Under a different mistress, her bad habits, which were not inveterate, were gradually cured, and she became in time a valuable servant.

The two mothers, who both paid a visit to the young couple, exerted themselves in once more getting all in order, and engaged a servant well recommended for aptitude, fidelity, and frugality. She proved herself just what she had been represented, thoroughly conversant with every kind of household-business, remarkably notable, good managing, and frugal, and taking real pleasure in preserving and

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beautifying every thing committed to her care. The disposition of her mistress to lavish expenditure often met a check. "O dear Ma'am, why should we take a pennyworth of milk, when a halfpenny worth is quite as much as we shall use?—Why should butter be used for such or such a purpose, when lard or dripping will answer just as well?—Why should we buy gravy meat, while we have plenty of bones and trimmings?—We want some iron spoons to save using silver in the kitchen, and a few common articles of crockery to save the best china and glass. We need not have a fresh joint to day, there is plenty remaining of yesterday, and I am sure you will like it nicely hashed or fricasseed. It is a pity to use good cloths for such or such a purpose, will you let me have some coarse hempen or tow?"

The young mistress smiled at these petty savings; but was quite willing to let Sarah take her own way, especially as every thing was done in a nice, neat, tasty

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manner. Moreover, the saving in expence at the end of the half-year, compared with the preceding period, though arising from the accumulation of pence, was found to have amounted to many pounds.

Eliza had no sort of objection either to frugality or comfort. She was delighted with the altered appearance of her house, and the reduction of her expenditure, and congratulated herself on having obtained so valuable a servant as Sarah, on whom she bestowed liberal tokens of her approbation. But, unfortunately, she did not derive from her service all the advantage she might and ought to have done. She did not consider that in the extravagance and carelessness of the former administration both mistress and servant were to blame, and that it was as necessary for the mistress to be improved as for the servant to be changed. But when she found all things going on comfortably and satisfactorily, she suffered herself to sink into a kind of supine helplessness, and leave

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all to the management of Sarah; thus foregoing the opportunity of qualifying herself to manage at any future time.

A young family coming on, rather encouraged than corrected this state of things. Sarah became more and more essential to the comfort of the family, and it must be added, the mistress became more and more of a cipher in it. It seemed as if Sarah possessed almost a boundless elasticity of power: however the work increased, she managed to attend to it; and however it was varied, she seemed to have skill and experience to meet it. Hence she became as dominant in the nursery as in the kitchen and laundry; and whatever assistance in either department became necessary, it was placed under the supreme control of Sarah, while the mistress was in every thing passive and acquiescent.

Sarah was really a well-disposed person, and, perhaps, bore her honours as meekly as any person placed in her circumstances

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could be expected to do. But such is the constitution of human nature, and such are the arrangements of Providence, that no individual can forsake his own sphere, or fill that of another, without some injury ensuing. Sarah would have been indeed an invaluable servant, had not the supineness of her mistress led to gradual retreats on the one part, and gradual incroachments on the other.

Sarah could not but be conscious of her value in the family, and by degrees she rose in self-importance, and her mistress was despised in her eyes. Still she was really attached, and generally behaved with great kindness and attention, especially in time of illness; but she suffered herself now and then to throw out a galling taunt or invidious comparison. These were generally borne in silence; but sometimes, in a moment of irritation, Eliza would venture sharply to reprove the impertinence. This generally led to some haughty retort—"Well, if I do not give

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satisfaction, I am very willing to leave." Then a few days of sullen silence succeeded, after which an explanation took place, in which the mistress generally had to make some sort of concession, and matters again went on harmoniously for a time.

At length, on one occasion, Sarah had mortifyingly displayed her superior ascendancy over the children, which the mother very naturally, but perhaps in her circumstances imprudently, resented, and declared she would not put up with it. Sarah declared neither would she. And it issued in a separation.

Now came the trial of strength. Had Eliza been diligent in improving herself during the five or six years that she had enjoyed the valuable services of Sarah, she might have fitted herself to take the management of the house, and to direct the movements of a stranger; but, instead of doing so, she had suffered herself to become more and more inactive. She knew not what was in the house, nor where it

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was to be found, nor in what proportions it was to be allotted out for use, nor how long it ought to last, nor when or where a fresh supply should be obtained. Hence she was incapable of giving directions to her new servant, and was left at the mercy of one who proved to be as extravagant and selfish as Sarah had been frugal and faithful. The children and the nurse-girl had been subject to Sarah, but they had not been subject to their mother and mistress, neither were they disposed to yield subjection to new authority. All therefore was anarchy and insubordination.

The difference soon attracted the notice and excited the dissatisfaction of the male head of the family; for though little disposed to interfere while all went on orderly and comfortably, he could not but perceive that order and comfort had forsaken his dwelling. The inconvenience was acknowledged by Eliza, and the remedy sought in changing her servants. Several successive changes produced no

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real improvement; and, at length, the habitual discomfort of home excited that restless kind of dissatisfaction which cannot long exist without irritation of temper. Who can wonder that even a kind-hearted and partial husband began to perceive that the root of the defect lay in the inefficiency of her who ought to preside over and direct the whole, and that he should sometimes give vent to his feelings in a gentle remonstrance, and sometimes in an expression of reproach, which was sometimes kindly received, but more frequently pettishly resented? Yes, the beginning of altercation between a really affectionate pair began in the disadvantageous comparison between domestic comforts in the days when Sarah was the servant, or rather the mistress, and those in which the mistress held, or rather neglected to hold, the reins.

Matters had gone on in this way nearly a year, when Sarah happened to call to see her former mistress and the children

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to whom she was really attached. The cordiality with which she was welcomed both by mother and children, was mingled, in the former, with feelings of confusion at the untidy, disorderly condition of the house, which could not escape observation. She stammered out an awkward apology about the carelessness and untidiness of her servants, and declared that she was wearied out of attempting to improve them, and must endeavour to suit herself by changing again.

Sarah threw out a hint that she was not very comfortable in her situation, and had some thoughts of quitting it at the end of the year.

Eliza eagerly caught the suggestion, and proposed to her to return to her old place, which, after stipulating for increase of wages, prerogatives, and indulgences, she consented to do; and in the course of a month she was reinstated in her former sovereignty, with an assistant of her own selecting.

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Order and comfort in the household department seemed restored as with a magic wand; except as the mistress had daily to endure some reproachful remark on the waste, destruction, and injury of property during the past year, which Sarah declared had exceeded the fair wear and tear of twenty years, or, as she sometimes qualified it, "at least seven, not to tell a bit of a story."

However, notwithstanding the rueful catalogue of things broken, misapplied, lost, or injured, which she pronounced it *impossible* ever to set to rights, things did in a great degree come to rights, much to the honour of Sarah's skill and industry in accomplishing *impossibilities.*

Order was not so quickly restored in the nursery: for steel fenders and grates into which the rust has eaten, may be more easily polished, and the grease may be extracted from the carpets, and the mahogany furniture which has become dull and scratched, may be made smooth

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and bright, and broken china, and lost brushes, and knives, &c. &c. may be replaced much more easily than children can be restored to a state of subordination, obedience, and harmony. Even this, however, was in some degree effected. They became comparatively manageable, and the parents comparatively satisfied and comfortable. But then, with all these improvements, a mischievous impression was made on all parties to the disparagement of the female head of the family, who unquestionably ought to be the centre of domestic comfort and good management. Sarah herself felt that she was a person of far more consequence in the house than her mistress, and she grew more and more assuming. The children felt that Sarah exercised more authority than their mother; that the mother might be disobeyed with impunity, but Sarah must not—indeed the authority of Sarah was sometimes called in to bolster up that of the mother—and no young person was ever

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suffered to entertain a disparaging opinion of a mother but it proved a real injury to his or her own character through future life. The husband perceived it, and insensibly acquired a habit of applying to, and depending upon, the servant rather than the wife for little domestic comforts and attentions. The wife perceived it; she felt herself degraded and slighted; but, instead of being roused to persevering exertion to regain her forfeited ascendancy by becoming what she ought to be, she suffered herself to sink in supine despondency and habitual discontent, giving vent to her feelings in angry but unavailing reprimands of her children, in ungraceful altercations with her servant, and in jealous reproaches of her husband. She often said, that from the time that Sarah returned to her service she had never known a day's domestic happiness. She might have said, that domestic happiness was forfeited in her first yielding to supineness, reclining on an able servant,

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and relaxing, or failing to employ, her own strenuous efforts to improve herself, and fill her proper sphere with fidelity, diligence, acceptance, and success.

The young mistress, who, at first starting, proposes to take a young servant, and train her to her own habits, ought already to have had some experience in domestic life, to be methodical in her arrangements, vigilant in her superintendence, and firm in her requirements. Where this is the case, a young mistress and a young servant may prove great acquisitions to each other, and much domestic order, economy, and comfort be the happy result.

In very early life, Mary had been initiated by a judicious mother in habits of domestic usefulness and order, and by the death of that mother the whole charge of domestic management had devolved on herself and a younger sister. The neatness, economy, and good taste, conspicuous through the arrangements of the fa-

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mily, were highly creditable to the young housekeepers, and greatly promoted the comfort of the bereaved father. They were thus also deriving observation and experience, which would eminently qualify them for discharging similar duties in houses of their own.

In prospect of her marriage with a worthy young minister of limited income, Mary considered it her duty to prepare for conducting domestic expenditure on the most economical plan, and hoped that, by personal activity and superintendence, she might be able to manage with a young girl, at low wages; one who, not having been out in service, would not have acquired high notions of spurning at the frugality and vigilance which she felt it incumbent on her to exercise. Accordingly, she selected a girl whom she had long known as a diligent and well-behaved Sunday-scholar. This girl was remarkably clean and neat in her dress, the eldest daughter of honest, industrious,

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and thrifty parents, and had long been accustomed to manage the house and the younger children during the occasional absence of her mother.

The young servant had received precisely the same kind of training in her line of life, that the young mistress had had in hers. A few days she was employed under the direction of an experienced servant to learn the methods of cleaning polished grates, mahogany, plate, and other articles, in which the furniture of a cottage affords no opportunity of practice.

The small house of which Mary was to be the mistress having been nicely papered and painted throughout, it was prepared by the young servant for the destined furniture, in the arrangement of which the superintending taste of the mistress presided. The furniture of every kind was substantial, neat, and good, and well adapted to its intended use. While arranging the various articles, Mary took pains to inform her little maid of the man-

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ner in which they were to be used and cleaned, and the care that would be requisite to preserve them from injury. From the admiration and pleasure expressed by Peggy at the neat appearance of each room or shelf, as the arrangements were completed, and her particular enquiries as to the place where each article was to be kept, Mary was led to indulge the hope that she would be disposed to adhere to the well-known but too little regarded household canons—

Do every thing in its proper time.

Keep every thing to its proper use.

Put every thing in its proper place.

Nor were these expectations disappointed. Peggy discovered, in no common degree, those virtues which constitute a valuable servant — fidelity, industry, cleanliness, thoughtfulness, and good-will.

A plan was judiciously laid down by the mistress for the regular performance of her domestic details. Her own daily superintendence and assistance trained

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the servant to habits of method and punctuality, and the house was a model of neatness and order.

In due time a little one was added to the cares and engagements of the mother. During her confinement, Peggy was emulous to keep every thing in as nice order and regularity as when her mistress was about. More than one unpleasant fracas occurred with the nurse, for wantonly burning a bright saucepan, or staining a beautifully polished mahogany table, or spilling grease on the carpet, or neglecting some tidy precaution suggested for preserving those articles from needless injury; and though, when all went on regularly, Peggy was a quiet and inoffensive girl, she was capable of discovering great irritation when the cleanliness and order in which she delighted were needlessly infringed upon.

She sorrowfully observed to her mistress that the house was in a dreadful state, enough to drive a decent person

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distracted; the only comfort she had, was in thinking that nurse would soon be gone, and her mistress about again, and then she could get all to rights.

"I fear, Peggy," said the mistress, "that this little stranger will sometimes interfere with our regular habits, and that you will perhaps consider him as great an intruder as nurse."

"O no, Ma'am," cried Peggy, "the child will be no trouble when nurse is gone, we shall soon get him into our regular ways. Get up a little earlier, and contrive a little nearer, it will be easy to manage what work he makes. I would rather have the work of three children than one nurse."

It was not an empty boast: for, by arising very early in the morning, she was able to render her mistress all the assistance in nursing that she required, and the house was kept in the same order as before; but then, it was by mutual good-management, division of labour, and strict regularity, that all this was effected.

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On the birth of a second child, it was considered necessary to engage the assistance of an additional servant, and a girl was taken to attend to the eldest child, to keep the nursery in order, and to assist in needlework. But after the trial of a month or two both mistress and maid concurred in the sentiment, that she was more hindrance than help, and that, by a little extra stretch of contrivance and exertion, they could manage without her.

This enterprising and persevering pair seemed to possess elasticity of power for whatever they undertook. The effort was made, and proved successful; and thus, from year to year, and from circumstance to circumstance, the work of the house was managed without any further assistance. The children being accustomed to regularity, were brought up with surprisingly little trouble, and at a very early age were made useful.

After thirty years' servitude, Peggy "ne'er had changed, nor wished to change

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her place." She knew the value of a comfortable home, steady regular gains, and a master, mistress, and family, really attached to her; they too, sensible of the value of a trusty faithful servant, from time to time advanced her wages, and often made her valuable presents, which her industry and frugality put it in their power to do.

Thus, she who was saving for her employers, was in reality saving for herself, and laid up a sufficient fund to make her comfortable in old age. She still speaks with pleasure of the silver spoons without a bruise, and the mahogany chairs without a chip, after thirty years' service; and of the eight children, every one of whom she has nursed and brought up to man and woman's estate,—every one of the young ladies knowing the duties of a mistress almost as well as their mamma, and the duties of a servant quite as well as herself.

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VICISSITUDES.

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VICISSITUDES.

VICISSITUDES in life are among the greatest trials both of native character and of religious principle. It requires great strength of mind to bear changes well, especially such as are sudden and unlooked for. Prosperous elevation has a tendency to elate and carry away the mind in vanity, self-conceit, and self-indulgence; and calamitous reverses have an equal tendency to depress the spirits, and paralyze the energies. But these changes are wisely designed for the exercise of character. Where only one sphere of life has been moved in, virtue may be said

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to be untested. For however well an individual may have conducted himself in one station, until trial is made, it cannot be ascertained how he would sustain the weight imposed, or exemplify the duties required, in another. It is a great attainment to be enabled to preserve the balance of the mind in all the unequal pressures of human life, and to have learned, like the great apostle, "in whatsoever state we are, therewith to be content," to "know how to be abased and how to abound," divinely instructed to maintain a dignified composure and consistency amidst every change, and enabled to realize the power of Christ strengthening for the honourable discharge of every varying duty. Phil. iv. 11—13.

These remarks are applicable to vicissitudes on a smaller as well as on a larger scale, and the dispositions of an individual are called forth and displayed in trifles, as well as in great affairs.

The following instances of changing

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scenes, entered upon with more or less propriety and gracefulness, may afford instructive hints to the young, who probably contemplate elevation of circumstances as naturally involving increase of happiness.

Maria was the daughter of a widow woman, who had honourably struggled to bring up a numerous family. She was a pretty-looking girl, and quite intent on making the best of her appearance to the utmost extent that her limited means permitted. Whatever she wore was tastily made up, and looked well on her. Her pleasing manners attracted the attention of persons in a superior line of life, who occasionally invited her to their houses; indeed she was nearly half her time visiting in one family or another as a kind of humble companion: thus she acquired a gentility of manners above her own rank, and often the means of supporting a genteel appearance, in presents of half-worn clothes and ornaments.

Maria was quite the belle in her own

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class of society, and several respectable young tradesmen were rival claimants for her regard. But she seemed fluctuating and unwilling to come to a decision, perhaps fearing to cast off present offers lest no better should propose, and yet reluctant to commit herself while a hope remained of raising herself by delay. Not one of her admirers could reproach her with having given him false encouragement, and yet each flattered himself that his persevering attentions would at length be rewarded. However, to the great surprise and disappointment of all, soon after Maria's return from a visit of some weeks in a distant county, it was announced that she was on the eve of marriage with a gentleman of large property and unbounded generosity,—as was soon fully attested by the splendour of the wedding, and the richness and variety of the wedding-dresses, which it was evident must have been furnished at his expence.

A few months after her marriage, Maria

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paid a visit to her mother, accompanied by her husband, whose fondness was unabated, and whose lavish expenditure for her gratification seemed boundless. Many indulgences which were heaped upon her seemed to have nothing to recommend them but their costliness. She was at that time preparing her baby-linen, and seemed determined to vie in costliness and elegance with nobility, if not with royalty; for it happened that at the same time a royal babe was expected, and the announcement or the rumour that such or such an article was bespoke or adopted in the palace, was eagerly seized as an intimation that the article was necessary and must immediately be procured. The nurse who attended her, and who had frequently been engaged in attending on families of the nobility, declared that she had never witnessed equal profusion and laboured costliness; for in many instances a less suitable article was employed, solely because it was more expensive and

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less accessible to common people. As one among a thousand instances, the infant was never permitted to wear lace that had been washed. Lace at that time was far more expensive than at present. Perhaps the lowest price that would be used for this illustrious baby was eight shillings a yard, from that up to twelve or fourteen shillings, each cap requiring from three to five yards, and when this became once dirty it was cast aside. This is but a specimen of the absurd pride of expence indulged by one who had formerly economized every penny, and who now delighted in costliness for the sake of displaying to what an extent she had the power of indulging it. The principle was carried out in every particular: in dress and decorations, in the furniture of the house, and the provision of the table, in the clothing, playthings, and education of the children, *that* mode was uniformly adopted which was considered most out of the reach of other people: in some in-

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stances it was the best, in some far otherwise. The medical attendant remarked, that if these pampered children of luxury could but be put upon the diet of a poor peasant, they would be as healthy as could be desired; and those to whom was intrusted the business of education, thought, that if permitted to employ the same course of instruction and discipline which they adopted in ordinary cases, a degree of intellect and docility might be discovered not greatly inferior to those of children in general; but as it was, they could only calculate on their being expensively killed or expensively spoiled.

Matters went on swimmingly for several years, and the husband never seemed disposed to lay any restraint on his wife's expences; but by degrees he began to be sickened and irritated. His extreme fondness for his wife gradually sunk into coldness, moroseness, and suspicion, and lavishness was exchanged for grudging

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parsimony. Never was an individual more completely metamorphosed.

For some years the wife had to endure daily mortifications; not in the want of any real comfort, but in being obliged to act very differently from what she had been accustomed to do, and to limit her expences, as well as to meet many unkind upbraidings from him who once thought no expence, however needless, too great for her gratification. She died in early life, leaving a young family, doubtless with many anxious misgivings as to their future comfort and provision. From that time the father became an inveterate miser and a gloomy misanthrope, taking no pleasure in the society of his children, and grudging, or even withholding, the expences needful for their respectable maintenance, education, and advancement in life; the education and early formation of habits of the elder children having been begun on a magnificent scale, and left unfinished, and those of the younger

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children left entirely to chance. Thus, without any real change of outward circumstances, the family experienced as great a vicissitude in point of indulgences and prospects, as if actually plunged from affluence to poverty.

The following sketch displays a young female unexpectedly raised from humble life, and bearing well the the alternations of prosperity and adversity.

It was towards the close of the last century, that a gentleman of noble and commanding aspect, but a somewhat pensive cast of countenance, arrived at a sequestered village near the banks of the Wye. He was on horseback, and attended by an intelligent looking animal of the canine species. A newly painted Swan, hoisted over the door of the village hostel, announcing good entertainment for man and horse, invited the stranger to make trial of the accommodations within. A cleanly though homely repast was soon prepared.

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Perhaps the novelty of the scene, together with a previous ride of several miles, concurred in giving zest to the provisions; and the traveller resolved to remain a few days in this delightful village, to explore the surrounding country, and enjoy the recreation of fishing. It was not without regret that he found himself compelled to relinquish this intention: for a visit to the hovel dignified with the name of a stable, convinced him that the accommodations afforded to his brute attendants were not quite so satisfactory as his own. In fact, the "entertainment" contemplated, consisted merely in affording shelter and a lock of hay to the horses of the neighbouring farmers who met there occasionally to discuss parochial matters, or to that of the apothecary, when detained in the village.

As these occasions occurred not more than three or four times in a year, the stable was habitually made a repository of brewing-utensils, cider-presses, and other

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lumber. Not a farmer in the neighbourhood would have consigned his meanest pony there for a night's lodging, still less was it adapted for the reception of a valuable steed like that of the stranger, evidently accustomed to accommodation and attention of the very first order.

Being assured, in answer to his enquiries after better accommodation, that there was not in the village another stable of any kind excepting those of the clergyman and farmers, the stranger again mounted and slowly rode away, uncertain whether to return to the town where he had slept the previous night, or to proceed to another village. In passing on, his attention was attracted by a small, but highly cultivated farm. The homestead presented a comfortable well-thatched dwelling, the bright and widely opened casements surrounded with honeysuckle and jessamine. Behind were barns, ricks, and haystacks, around which every variety of poultry were picking their meal. On

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one side was an apple-orchard in all its pride and beauty, on the other a kitchen-garden well stocked and nicely arranged. In front a plot with a profusion of gay and fragrant flowers. Here the farmer and one of his men were busily engaged in hiving a swarm of bees, while his wife was drawing a group of healthy children to a safe distance from the scene. A modest looking girl of sixteen or seventeen, with her milk-pail, tripped across the meadow opposite where several fine cows were grazing.

The traveller halted to watch the hiving of the bees, an operation which he had never before witnessed. It was soon dexterously and safely accomplished, and then first the sturdy yeoman observed the stranger at his gate, whom he accosted with frank and cordial courtesy. A few minutes' conversation served to explain the disappointment of the stranger, and to elicit from the farmer an offer of accommodation, which was accepted without

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reluctance. The gentleman's horse was conducted to a stable, and supplied with provisions, more according to his wont, than those afforded at the redoubtable Swan; while his master accompanied the farmer over his grounds, and the busy housewife hastened to prepare their best apartment for the reception of their guest.

For nearly a week the stranger continued to partake the hospitality of the farmer and his family, cheerfully conforming himself to their rural habits, going forth to seek his own amusements without interfering with their pursuits, and with real relish partaking of their simple yet wholesome and abundant fare. On proposing to take his departure, the visiter, with the utmost delicacy, proffered a liberal remuneration for the accommodation he had enjoyed. This was generously declined, both the farmer and his wife declaring, they had no other thought than that of hospitable courtesy.

"My worthy friends," said the guest,

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"your generous kindness to a stranger lays him under obligations that no pecuniary returns can ever compensate, and yet I must keenly regret that you will not accept such returns as it is in my power to offer. I had hoped that I might be warranted in making a further proposal. It is needless particularly to enter into my circumstances. Family altercations have led me to wish to reside for a time in retirement, and I am seeking a quiet family in which to domesticate myself. The situation and scenery of your secluded village, and your comfortable and well-ordered household, form precisely the retreat I should choose. Should it meet your convenience and inclination to receive me as an inmate, and provide for the accommodation of my horse and my dog, I shall be happy to make a liberal arrangement, and regularly to pay half a year in advance. Take a day to consider my proposal, and let me know the result. Meanwhile, though I will not again urge

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you to accept a remuneration for the past, allow me to present a trifle to be divided among the children for the purchase of books or other gratifications."

The farmer and his spouse withdrew to deliberate on the proposal. In some respects nothing could be more seasonable, as an aunt of the good woman's, who had for several years boarded with them, was lately dead; the best parlour and bedroom, which she had occupied, were quite at liberty, and the loss of her annual stipend, though trivial compared with what the gentleman offered, was felt, as it had been a material assistance in clothing and educating the family. But, then, what did they know of the character of the stranger? he was quiet and agreeable, yet he might not be a safe and suitable inmate. It was one thing to shew civility to a stranger for a few days, and another to receive him for a constancy into the house: and yet there was something so honest in his countenance they could not think ill

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of him; besides his proposal to pay in advance, was so generous and honourable. These various considerations having been discussed, the result communicated to the stranger, was, that, if he could make himself content with their plain style of living, they should be happy to receive him.

Accordingly, having placed in their hand the sum proposed, he departed, for the purpose of arranging for the removal of such things as he might wish to possess in his retreat.

In a few days, several packages arrived, containing, beside his wardrobe, a select and valuable library, a pianoforte, globes, desks, easels, and every other requisite for writing, drawing, and music, with a few handsome articles of furniture with which the farm-house was before unprovided. The owner also arrived to superintend their arrangement: this occupied several days, after which he settled down to a regular course of employment. He familiarized himself with the agricultural pur-

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suits of the farmer. He read much, and often reeeived supplies of new publications, especially such as suggested rural improvements and experiments. In these he took a lively interest, often personally inspecting their adoption.

The farmer was a man of plain sound sense, not prejudiced against the suggestions of others merely because they differed from his former practice, nor yet easily led away by wild speculations and theories. He cautiously proved, and then intelligently adopted such projects as bore the test of reason and experience, or shrewdly detected the sophistry of such as possessed only a plausible outside. Hence the suggestions of modern science furnished interesting scope for research on the part of the gentleman, and of practical improvement on that of the husbandman.

"The gentleman," or "the squire" as he was usually termed among the villagers, discovered no inclination for the sports of the field, yet he spent much time abroad,

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either in riding or walking in the woods in search of botanical specimens, or other natural curiosities, of which he formed a large collection,—sometimes sketching from nature, for which he discovered considerable genius, and tastefully ornamenting his apartment with his own productions,—often falling into conversation with the peasantry, and making himself familiar with their habits and circumstances,—in times of sickness and trouble ministering to their relief, either personally, or dispensing his bounty through the farmer's wife, with an injunction to secrecy. In his walks he frequently took as his companion one or other of the farmer's children, who became much attached to him, and to whom he imparted much useful knowledge.

But there was one individual with whom he had little intercourse, and yet concerning whom he felt a deep and growing interest. It was Lucy, the eldest of the family, a girl of retiring habits, but pos-

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sessing so much loveliness of person, intelligence of mind, and sweetness of disposition, as could not be overlooked. Lucy was not cultivated according to the modes of the day, but her native good sense, and the instructions of a judicious mother, led her to exercise observation on every surrounding object, and to embrace every opportunity of gaining information. Hence, she was not uninformed. Correctness of principle, good taste, and good feeling, concurred in leading her to cultivate every opportunity of intellectual improvement, without carrying her away from the immediate duties of her station. She was distinguished by humility and industry, always usefully employed, yet alike estranged from the vulgar, bustling display of her industry, and the false refinement that would be ashamed of it. In all she did, there was a quiet, graceful superiority of manners, which, though it sought not observation, could not fail of attracting it.

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Often, when little conscious of it, she was watched by the gentleman gliding along with her milk-pail at early morn or dewy eve. Daily was the well-flavoured butter, or the delicate pastry, eaten with an additional relish, when he thought of her pretty hands having moulded the pats or kneaded the paste. He watched her nimble fingers as they plied the busy needle; he observed her gentle assiduity in ministering to the comfort of her mother and a little sister during illness; he watched her neat and tasteful arrangement of the flower-beds, and the well-assorted nosegay that adorned the mantel-shelf. He talked to the little ones of their books and tasks, and found it was sister Lucy who taught them to read and to work. He heard in the cottages of the poor of her kindness and sympathy. He marked the modest simplicity and suitability of her dress on all occasions, and the meek and devout attention with which she engaged in the religious services of

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the family and of the sanctuary. He compared her with many females of high birth and polished education, and in his esteem the simple cottage-maid surpassed them all.

He was not, however, hasty in expressing his sentiments or acting upon his predilections. More than three years elapsed, in which he daily watched the unfolding of Lucy's character, without either herself or her parents suspecting the impression that had been made. At length he candidly and explicitly opened his mind to the parents, declaring his decided preference and determination, with their consent and her own, to marry the girl of his choice; but at the same time expressing his honourable resolution not to disturb her tranquillity of mind by attempting to awaken an attachment which they might not approve.

No long hesitation was felt or affected by the farmer or his wife: they had had sufficient intercourse with their inmate to be perfectly satisfied with his disposition

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and habits, and they felt no fastidious curiosity about his family. Whatever cause of dissension might have existed, no disposition had been manifested to pursue him in his retreat, and he possessed uncontrolled resources, sufficient for his own moderate wishes, and far beyond the humble views of Lucy and her parents. They felt honoured by the proposal, but, as they knew nothing of her sentiments, declared that they would never force the affections of their child on either hand.

Left thus at full liberty to pursue his own course, it may be conjectured that the task was not arduous for a handsome and accomplished gentleman of unblemished character, prepossessing manners, and ample resources, to win the affections of a warm-hearted and unsophisticated cottage-maid.

A few slight changes, scarcely perceptible to the unpractised eyes of the villagers, in the dress and employments of Lucy, and in the domestic arrangements

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of the farm-house, had barely awakened the tongue of rumour, when the village-bells proclaimed a full confirmation of the half-formed surmise. Lucy had become the wife of the farm-house inmate.

For some time the wedded pair continued to occupy their apartments in the farm-house, the bride becoming the apt and willing pupil of her husband in the various departments of useful literature and polite accomplishments. But an opportunity offering, the gentleman purchased a small estate contiguous to the farm of his father-in-law, and built on it an elegant but simple cottage where, for several years, they enjoyed all the sweets of cultivated intercourse and connubial bliss, rearing and educating a blooming little family, and scattering blessings on the neighbourhood around.

The amiable Lucy discovered the same quiet self-possession and unaffected simplicity of character, as when in days of yore she tripped along with her milk-pail,

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or trained the honeysuckle or jessamine over the farm-house porch; there was not an individual in the village who did not rejoice in her elevation, and acknowledge that it was well merited and well sustained.

At length, a communication was received which required the absence of the husband for a few days. Painful was the separation, and many were the forebodings of the gentle Lucy. They were, however, speedily dispelled by the return of him whom she loved best. He came in a handsome carriage, to conduct her and her children on a visit to his father, of whom he was the only son by a first marriage.

In consequence of a second connexion and second family, the eldest son and heir, during his youth, had experienced much neglect and unkindness; and on coming of age, and taking possession of his mother's property, he had resolved on separating himself from the family, and either going abroad, or seeking some quiet

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seclusion in his native land. He had not travelled long, before he took up his abode in the farm-house. One faithful friend alone possessed the secret of his retreat: from him he received the intelligence of his father's declining health and desire once more to embrace him. The summons was obeyed, a reconciliation was effected, and the old gentleman desired to see his daughter-in-law and his grandchildren. It was then first that her husband named his father as the titled branch of a noble family.

Only a few weeks intervened, ere the husband of Lucy closed his father's eyes, and succeeded to the titles and estates.

And now the fair lily of the vale was transplanted to a gay parterre. She was much more surprised than elated with this sudden turn of fortune. She had enjoyed so much felicity in rural scenes and domestic engagements, that she could scarcely conceive of any accession; and the idea of leaving her native village and

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her beloved parents was a real trial to her. As a wife and mother, however, she rejoiced in the restoration of her husband to the sphere in which he had been accustomed to move, and in the provision and prospects of her children. With native ease and gracefulness she stepped into her new sphere as though it were perfectly habitual to her; and, while she gained the admiration and respect of the circle in which she moved, by her prudence, condescension, and benevolence, she insured what was incomparably more valuable—the happiness of her family, the attachment and gratitude of her household and of the poor, and the testimony of her own conscience. Although the mistress of two elegant mansions in the country and one in London, she never assumed airs of state and greatness. Her peculiar enjoyment was in an annual retreat to the beloved cottage farm-house of her childhood, where her first years of connubial felicity had been spent.

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Exaltation and wealth cannot exclude the inroads of affliction, and in course of years Lucy was a partaker of trials of various kinds. She, however, through life, possessed and exemplified that true nobleness of mind which dignified her in humble sphere, and preserved her, when elevated, from vanity and haughtiness. Especially was her mind well regulated by that habitual view of things unseen, which led her duly to balance all the transitory changes of earth and time; "for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

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THE EMIGRANTS.

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THE EMIGRANTS.

MANY years ago, in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, London, (then distinguished as the west end of the town, though now nearly in its centre,) a school was kept by a French lady, Madame D——, for the instruction of young ladies in the French language, embroidery, and painting.

It was a handsome apartment in which Madame received her pupils, and contained many articles of rich and costly furniture, now chiefly valuable as relics of past grandeur. Her dress was rich but old-fashioned, and seemed to be preserved

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with the utmost care,—perhaps with some apprehension that the wardrobe, which was never replenished, might not last as long as the need of the wearer. On week days it was never varied; but on the Sunday the pupils sometimes met their governess dressed in very rich brocade, with apron and capes of Valenciennes lace, and other correspondent appendages. She was accompanied by an elderly gentleman in a silver drab coat, embroidered waistcoat, silk stockings, silver buckles, and bearing the general aspect of an old-fashioned French beau of the eighteenth century.

Their resort was the Greek Church, Soho, where the French protestants of that part of London generally attended. The respect with which Monsieur and Madame were saluted by their brethren who met them going in or coming out of church, indicated a superiority of rank acknowledged by the one party and familiar to the other.

They were generally followed by a re-

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spectable looking woman about their own age, who carried their books, and treated them with a deference bordering on homage. She was evidently a long-attached domestic; and the pensive expression of her countenance, mingled with the characteristic air of sprightliness, which, in the French people, neither age nor sorrow can altogether obliterate, indicated mingled emotions of regret and hope, of which not her own circumstances, but those of her beloved master and mistress, were the object.

Little, however, was known in the neighbourhood of the quality, domestic habits, or resources, of the French family. The people of the house could only say that they were quiet and peaceable, and paid their rent regularly: that Monsieur left home every morning before breakfast, and did not return till evening: that Madame was engaged in her school most of the day: that Marguerite was stirring early in the morning, and got all things in order;

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and that, having waited on her mistress with breakfast, she went out, taking with her a small basket, and returned no more till evening. The pupils had never seen either Monsieur or Marguerite in the house; and, in fact, some of them had always supposed that Madame was wholly unconnected.

One time Madame for several days appeared unwell and in trouble: her native vivacity struggled to break through the gloom; but she could not always repress the struggling sigh or the starting tear.

One of her pupils, at least, observed her distress. Between this girl and her governess there had always been a more than ordinary sympathy; the former also being of French extraction, a descendant of those worthies whom persecution drove from their native soil to seek an asylum in Britain. The child had heard much of the sufferings and constancy of her ancestors and others with whom they were acquainted; and she had often lingered

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behind the other scholars and offered to wind silk for her governess, or to assist her in embroidery, in which she employed the interval of school hours, in order to engage her in talk about France and the persecuted Huguenots. Many an affecting soul-stirring narrative had she related; but she had never made the slightest allusion to her own family, or the circumstances in which she had been placed in France, or those which brought her to England; and whatever of youthful curiosity might be felt, respect and delicacy had always suppressed any enquiries. But when the affectionate girl saw her governess in trouble, she longed to beg a share in her grief, and, if it were possible, to contribute to her relief. When the other pupils were putting away their work, Marie contrived to delay a little, and, when they were gone, tenderly enquired if Madame were ill, or unhappy, and if she could be of any service to her.

Madame affectionately embraced the

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child, and replied, that her good Marguerite was ill, and she feared she should lose her; "but," said she, "do not mention it, for pupils are sometimes removed if it is known that there is illness in the house; and I have already lost too many, owing to these new schools springing up all around which profess to teach everything."

Marie recollected that three out of their little number had left the last quarter to go to schools of another description; and, from the pathetic tone in which Madame referred to it, she feared that she was distressed by the loss of their payment: "besides," thought she, "if Marguerite is ill, Madame has to do the work herself, to which she is not accustomed, and also to attend upon her sick servant. She will soon herself be ill with fatigue and grief. Allow me, dear Madame, to stay with you and assist you. My aunt often permits me to make my bed, or wash the tea-things, as she wishes me to learn to be useful."

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"Thank you, my child," replied the governess, "I have nothing that I wish done:—unless you would go an errand for me. I am not myself used to go out, and, indeed, I cannot well leave home; but perhaps your aunt will object."

"O no, no, my aunt would be glad that I should do anything you wish.—Tell me, where shall I go?"

From a handsome china cup in the beaufet, Madame reached a sixpence, and requested Marie to procure at the confectioner's a jelly, and, if the money would afford it, two sponge-cakes, for her sick Marguerite.

On her return, the governess, with apparent anxiety, asked, "Was the money enough?"

"Yes, it is all right," replied Marie, "and when you want more jelly and cakes, please to let me fetch them."

The confectioner had charged eightpence, but Marie had a few pence in her pocket, which she had gladly supplied, and

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only wished to conceal it from her governess. "Now, Madame," said she, "is there any other errand?"

"Yes," replied the governess with much hesitation, bringing out one penny; "but I fear you *will not* like to do this."

"O yes, I shall like it, whatever it may be."

"Well, be sure you do not tell the young ladies; but I want one halfpenny roll, and one halfpenny worth of liver already boiled: there is a clean shop where they keep it in Long-Acre."

"What, Madame, do you mean meat for your cat?"

"Yes,—yes, it is the meat of cats that I want; make haste, my dear child."

Marie hastened on her singular errand, and on her return, found her governess waiting at the top of the stairs to receive the basket. She thanked her, and desired her to go home quickly lest her aunt should be uneasy.

Marie had descended the stairs when

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she recollected having left her bag, and returned to fetch it. To her astonishment, and almost horror, she found Madame already making her meal on the scanty and unsavoury food she had just procured. She instantly retreated, and hoped that she had not been perceived; but her thoughtful and affectionate mind was absorbed in observations and conjectures. At the dinner-table, she had no inclination to partake of food, and on being pressed to do so, burst into tears. Her uncle and aunt supposed she was ill, or that she had been reprimanded for a fault at school, a circumstance which had never before occurred. They urged her to confess the truth, promising to intercede with her governess for forgiveness. Marie feared, lest by divulging the circumstances that had come to her knowledge she should violate the confidence reposed in her, and perhaps injure the interests she wished to promote; and yet she hoped that by mentioning the matter, something

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might be done to meet the case. She resolved, therefore, to venture on the generosity of her friends, and communicated what had passed.

Her simple, heartfelt eloquence was not expended in vain on her benevolent relatives; least of all, on a cousin who happened to be present, and who, even at that early age, regarded her with feelings of partiality, and called her his little wife:—an engagement which maturer years confirmed and fulfilled. Each of the little party was prompt and zealous in devising some scheme for ascertaining the circumstances of the family, and conveying assistance in the most delicate manner possible. Happily, it was recollected that quarter-day was at hand, and that it would be no offence for Mrs. R—— to call and pay her niece's schooling rather before hand, which might afford an opportunity of endeavouring to win the confidence of those whom it was desired to serve. Young Pierre requested her, if possible,

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to find out the name and family connexions of Madame. That she was of French extraction, if not a native, could not be doubted: that she was a protestant, was gathered from her regular attendance at the Soho Church. There was the possibility that either she or her family might have been driven to England by persecution. It was, moreover, just possible that they might prove to have been of noble extraction—and then—but he would say nothing about his project until he knew something of the grounds on which he should proceed.

By the time that the pupils were dismissed in the afternoon Mrs. R—— made her proposed call. She was received with some surprise and trepidation; but the unexpected payment even of that small sum was so seasonable and welcome, that the poor lady could not refrain from acknowledging it as an immediate interposition of Heaven.

Mrs. R—— improved the moment of

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sudden emotion, and, in the most delicate manner possible, pressed upon her acceptance a further sum as a present expressive of gratitude for the great attention bestowed by Madame on her niece; and begged to be informed if she could in any way be serviceable to her.

The barrier once broken, the lively and grateful Frenchwoman became freely communicative. The substance of her story was, that she was the only daughter of a French family of distinction, and brought up in luxury and splendour little inferior to those of a court. Her mother had been dead many years. Her father being marked as a zealous Huguenot and favourer of the Reformed Church and its ministers, was an object of courtly displeasure, and suffered injuries and annoyances of various kinds. Fain would he have abandoned his paternal estates, and sought an asylum in Switzerland or England; but, for the sake of his poor tenants and dependents, he resolved, as long as

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possible, to weather the storm. His house afforded a shelter to the persecuted ministers, and the woods and caves of his estate were their chapels; the little congregation being assembled by some secret signal, and enjoying the solaces of devotion even at the peril of their lives.

She related many hair's breadth escapes. At length, the violence of persecution arose to such a height, that while the people were assembled at worship, their houses were ransacked, some set fire to; several infirm persons and infants put to death, or dragged from their beds, and left exposed to a tremendous storm; a minister while preaching was shot dead, and the people being dispersed in terror, some were seized and imprisoned, others fled for their safety, without regard to the preservation of their little property; some, who had left part of their families in their dwellings, returned, and found them cruelly exposed, or otherwise ill-treated; and some concealed themselves in the woods,

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subsisting on wild fruits, and enduring many kinds of hardships, in the hope that, ere long, the fury of persecution having spent itself, they might return to their abodes unmolested. Among the latter, were Madame, her father, and a cousin to whom she had long been affianced.

They were attended in their concealment by a faithful old steward, and Marguerite his daughter, the foster-sister and waiting-maid of Madame. After a while, the steward by night ventured to visit the mansion, and succeeded in bringing away, first some provisions and cordials to recruit the exhausted frames of the objects of his care, and by degrees saving many valuables which had escaped the ravages of the soldiery. These from time to time he carefully deposited in a place of concealment and safety, in the hope that an opportunity might occur of rendering them available to procure the means of escape and future support.

Marguerite often entreated permission

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to accompany her father on these nightly visits to the mansion, pleading her more intimate acquaintance with all its secret recesses and stores, and the greater readiness with which she could pitch upon such things as were most intrinsically valuable or most absolutely needful. The necessity of carrying on these operations in the dark, rendered her services peculiarly desirable; and, at length, her father and friends were induced to yield to her earnest entreaties, and accept her aid; by which the comfort of the wanderers was greatly promoted, and a valuable store was accumulated for future need.

On one of these occasions, the steward and his daughter were returning to their place of concealment just at the earliest dawn, when, in an unfrequented path of the wood, they stumbled over a human body. Their terror was extreme, lest any marauders should have discovered and invaded the asylum and put to death its inmates; or lest the supposed corpse

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should be one of a party concealed in the wood to waylay their movements.

Marguerite with great presence of mind drew her father on a few paces from the spot, and whispered to him to conceal himself behind a tree, while she endeavoured to ascertain whether the occasion of their terror were dead or living; and whether his garments were such as to indicate him the victim or the agent of persecution. "If," said she, "a scuffle should ensue, and our persecutors should come forth from their ambush, fly, my father, and secure the escape of our friends. Fear not for me; God will help and preserve me. I will first direct their attention in a different direction, and then trust to my swiftness and knowledge of the intricacies of the wood to evade their pursuit; even if I should lose my life, it will be well bestowed if it secure those of my master and mistress; but if you, my father, should perish, who could protect, and guide, and provide for them?"

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The generous girl waited not for a reply, but gently stole back to the spot where the body lay. She stooped down and examined, and, though she could perceive no breath, found that there was yet warmth remaining. The light was not yet sufficiently advanced for her to judge of the features or the dress; but, at least, she assured herself that the man was not armed, neither could she perceive any blood, or other indication of violence. Forgetting, therefore, her own peril, she thought only of the possibility of saving the life of a fellow-creature. She took from her pocket a smelling-bottle, which she applied to his nose and temples, and presently a feeble motion convinced her that the stranger was not quite dead. In moving his arm, a book was discovered, which, by feeling the silver clasps, she concluded to be a Bible,—at that time of persecution, no equivocal indication that its owner was one who loved its sacred contents, who was probably driven to

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seek shelter from his persecutors, and had sunk with exhaustion and want. The very conjecture was a relief.

Marguerite hastened to relieve the apprehensions of her father, and to consult what could be done with the stranger. The advancing dawn forbade them to remain longer abroad, yet they could not endure to leave him to perish, which would inevitably be the case, unless means were used to nourish the feeble embers of life; and such was the prevalence of brotherly love, that, taking the mere circumstance of a Bible being found in his possession as an evidence of brotherhood, it was resolved to convey him to their abode.

While the steward hastened to the cave to unload himself, and to engage the assistance of his master's kinsman, Marguerite remained with the stranger, again applying her smelling-bottle, and rubbing his temples. Near at hand was a clear rivulet:—she had no vessel in which

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to obtain a draught of its refreshing streams; but she ran to it, filled the palm of her hand, and applied it to the lips of the sufferer. This she did again and again; at length, he evidently made an attempt to swallow. Thus encouraged, Marguerite redoubled her efforts, and by the time her father returned with the young count, the stranger opened his eyes. He was not yet fully restored to consciousness, or able to stand; and, as time pressed, his kind preservers took him up and carried him to their secret abode. There administering to him such cordials as their circumstances afforded, he gradually revived. His first expression of consciousness, was that of gratitude and devotion to the Father of his mercies. Feeble as was the voice in which these sentiments were uttered, it seemed not altogether strange to those who heard it: all the little household crowded round in anxious curiosity to see if they could recognize the countenance; but in vain,—

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so pale and haggard were the features, that though, as it afterwards proved, he was well known to them all, not one could recollect him. But in a few minutes the stranger recognized the voices of those who attended him, and rousing himself in an ecstacy of joy, exclaimed, "Ah! my good friend Laval! Marguerite! my child! Do you not know your pastor? But Monsieur the duke and his dear daughter, are they preserved? I fear to ask."

Yes, the stranger was indeed one of the faithful preachers of God's word, who had often instructed the little scattered band, and had been hospitably entertained at the house of the nobleman, or that of his steward, as circumstances dictated. His joy was unbounded on finding himself surrounded by those for whose safety he had endured many distressing apprehensions; nor was theirs inferior who had been instrumental in preserving his life, and adding to their little company one whose spiritual counsels and consolation would

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afford a delightful solace to their seclusion and privations.

The good man had come to visit his friends, and propose the gathering together of the assembly: but, ere his arrival, the troubles had broken out; the flock was dispersed; he could not find a friendly shelter, neither could he retreat in safety. He had been several days concealed in the wood, not daring to venture into the public road; and, at length, had fallen from exhaustion and want of sustenance, when he was providentially found by Laval and his daughter.

Several weeks elapsed, during which the family abode in their hiding-place, subsisting chiefly on the produce of the fields and woods, with such articles of provision as Laval had been able to rescue from the mansion; and once or twice that he ventured to the road in disguise, and met a baker's man, of whom he obtained some loaves of bread. This extraordinary indulgence, for such it was indeed reckoned,

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was obtained at no small risk and labour; for, although the man was under great obligations to the lord of the estate, and was himself esteemed a Huguenot, such were the temptations both of fear and interest, that it was hard to trust even a friend or brother. A high reward was offered for the apprehension of the duke; and any one supposed to know his place of concealment, and not divulge it, was liable to be himself seized and put to the rack. Laval, therefore, suffered not even the friendly baker to be a partaker of the secret, but obtained the bread as if only for himself and his family; and even then, to evade the possibility of being watched to the place of his master's retreat, carried it some miles in another direction, and there concealed himself till night, when he carried it to the expecting tenants of the cave, and relieved them from distressing apprehensions for his safety.

Notwithstanding the precautions of Laval, the baker suspected that he was the

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guardian of his master's retreat. Happily, however, he was grateful and faithful, as well as intelligent; and, so far from attempting to betray his knowledge or his suspicions, he projected a scheme for the escape of the persecuted nobleman.

Day after day as he passed with his cart, he waited, and watched at the turning whence Laval had issued, hoping that he would meet him for a fresh supply; at length he appeared, and, as before, purchased as much bread as he could well carry.

The baker then, with a peculiarly significant expression, presented him with a small loaf, and without saying another word drove off. The loaf thus given, was very dry and stale, as if it had been several days baked. Laval felt assured that it contained some important communication; he concealed it in the crown of his hat, and hastened to his expectant family.

While they eagerly feasted on the dainty meal—ah! in their days of luxury how

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little had they thought of esteeming such a repast a dainty!—Laval retreated, and broke the stale loaf, in the midst of which he found a billet and a lobster-claw, smoothed at the end for a tobacco-stopper. The former stated fully, though in obscure terms, the extreme danger of a certain nobleman being discovered, and urged the expediting of his departure, intimating that means were contrived by a friend of the family for effecting their escape, if they had confidence enough to commit themselves to his direction. The projector calculating that the family consisted of four or five, as it was impossible that so large a party could travel together in safety, proposed that two should escape to Switzerland or Germany, and the rest to Calais, and thence to England. Of the former, it was earnestly recommended that one should be the duke himself, as most obnoxious and distinctly proscribed by government. If the proposal were accepted, the tobacco-stopper was to be

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given next day to the baker's man, containing a billet, with nothing more than a description of the height, complexion, &c. of the two persons who were first to escape; who, at an appointed hour in the ensuing night, were to conceal themselves in a large hollow tree, near the road side, which was exactly described, and there to remain in silence until the same tobacco-stopper was thrown in to them; then, to come forth and resign themselves implicitly to the person from whom they should receive it.

Laval immediately laid the proposal before the little band.

The prospect of escape was first eagerly grasped: then a misgiving was started, whether it might not be the stratagem of enemies; but, why, if enemies were aware of their retreat, why should they not rather surround and seize them, than propose a scheme like this, which, after all, would not put them more in their power than they already were?

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This suspicion was dismissed, and it was resolved to venture on accepting the friendly offer. But, then, a fresh difficulty arose from the necessity of separating the party. Who should go first? and who should remain? "Let the father and daughter escape together," was the first suggestion, "the rest of us can shift for ourselves, and perhaps procure some property for their future use." But, on further consideration, it was thought that their safety would be better secured by separating, and escaping in different directions.

Laval and his daughter declared themselves the devoted servants of their dear master and young lady, and willing to separate or go together as might be most promising for them.

It was agreed, that, if possible, the females should be kept together; but, then, who should be their protector? "No," said the father, "I cannot leave my child; rather let me die in defending her, than escape in safety and hear that mischief

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has befallen her:—why cannot we all attempt our escape together, and live or die as Providence shall order."

"We must look for the direction and blessing of Providence," observed the minister, "in following the best suggestions of human prudence, not in neglecting them. One of the most bitter ingredients in our cup of suffering, is the separation of those who would fain dwell together in unity; but it is the cup that our Father has given us, and shall we not drink it? and, when apart from each other in person, may we not meet in spirit at the throne of grace, and plead with Him who is able to gather those that are scattered, and when least expected to give us many happy meetings on earth, and a joyful meeting at last in heaven? In your deliberations, my dear friends, take me not into account, unless it is possible for me in any way to serve you; let me not be an incumbrance or hindrance to any of your movements. If I cannot serve

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you, leave me to myself. He who directed you to save my life, can and will preserve me, and find me a shelter among some of his hidden ones in this country, or enable me to reach my own native valley in Switzerland."

"Switzerland!" exclaimed Laval, "are you, reverend Sir, a native of Switzerland? and are you well acquainted with the country, and the road thither?"

"Yes, surely," returned the minister; "have not my journeys almost always been conducted on foot? There is not a town or a village from hence to Lausanne with which I am not familiar: and there I am at home."

"And have you friends there?" continued Laval.

"Yes, surely; my parents, my kindred all are there."

"Then, surely, you are fittest companion for my lord duke; you could conduct his way, and find him an asylum."

"Most gladly," returned the minister,

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"should I conduct my dear lord to many an abode in my native land where he would be welcomed as the blessed of the Lord, whose name is honoured as a succourer of the saints; but I fear that my simplicity, and ignorance of the wisdom of the world and the snares of men, should lead him into danger while passing through this dangerous land."

"Our unknown friend," replied Laval, "undertakes the conveyance of my lord and one companion; the point to be decided is, who is the fittest?"

"My child! my child!" exclaimed the father.

Laval and the young count fixed their eyes on each other, and then seemed lost in thought for a minute or two. The count broke the silence. "Dare I, my uncle, press for a legal right to be her protector? Had tranquillity prevailed, by this time she would have been mine: and though we cannot now celebrate our union in the sacred temple where our prayers

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have often ascended to God, and though we are driven from our worldly possessions, and from our native land; yet, may we not here, in the presence of God and these his saints, and sanctioned by the minister of his word, record our solemn engagements to each other, and go forth to our exile as one? Believe me, that, had not the safety of the family required some immediate and effectual measure, I would not have pressed for the fulfilment of our engagements until returning tranquillity permitted the nuptials to be celebrated with due publicity and splendour, and until we could occupy the halls of our ancestors; but now,—likely as we are to be driven into mountains, and dens, and caves of the earth, to be desolate, afflicted, tormented, and, as a family, scattered from each other,—is it not lawful and expedient to secure to her who is so inexpressibly dear to each of us, a suitable protector in each? Then, however we may be scattered, her safety and

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comfort may be with propriety committed to her father, her husband, her minister, or her faithful servant, as changing exigences may dictate.

The proposal of the young count recommended itself to the judgment of all. Circumstances pressed for a decision. There was no time for fastidious hesitation: the consent of the duke and his daughter was yielded; and the following morning the minister joined the hands of the young pair according to the custom of the Reformed Churches; giving, as a security in case of mischance befalling the persons or property of any, to each of the parties present an attestation of the transaction, signed by all as witnesses.

No sooner was the ceremony over, than it was time for Laval to convey the appointed signal to their unknown friend.

It was now easily decided that the duke should depart accompanied by the minister: accordingly, a description of their persons was inclosed in the to-

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bacco-stopper, and deposited in the baker's cart.

Tender and affecting was the separation that ensued. Whether they might ever all meet again, or when, and under what circumstances, was beyond the reach of conjecture. They, however, encouraged each other in constancy to their Lord and Master, in reliance on his long experienced care and providence, and in joyful expectation of that day, when each, having been faithful unto death, should receive at his hands the crown of life.

Night arrived. Laval conducted his beloved master and the minister to the spot appointed. They took their station in the hollow tree, and he at some little distance waited the event. Presently a man on horseback came up. He dismounted, tied his horse to a tree, went to another hollow tree, and fetched out a bundle, then approached that in which the fugitives were concealed, and threw in the tobacco-stopper. On receiving the signal,

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they came forth. The stranger motioned to them hastily to change their dress for the articles in the bundle. In a few moments, by the light of the moon, the duke was wrapped in the clothes of an old woman, and the minister in those of a soldier; a handkerchief tied round the arm of the latter gave him the appearance of having been wounded, and his wan countenance, which had not yet recovered the effects of hardship and fasting, favoured the stratagem.

"Is any one near?" whispered the stranger.

The duke pointed to the place of Laval's concealment. The bundle of clothes was committed to his care. The new recruit was directed to return to his hollow tree, and wait there until the moon, which then shone brightly, had given place to the dawn of day;—then to come forth, and seat himself by the road-side as if exhausted with fatigue, until a cart should pass loaded with sacks of flour from the

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mill. "The carter," continued the stranger, "will probably offer you a lift; accept his kindness, play your part well, don't say a word that can be avoided; and the Lord be your protector. If the carter should refuse to assist you, say nothing; but, when he has passed, return to your hollow tree until called forth by the same signal as before. You, Madame," addressing the duke, "must mount behind me, our business requires haste."

The duke was quickly seated on the pillion, his guardian sprung up before him, and they were out of sight in an instant.

"God send the good hour," exclaimed the wife of the guard or watch at the entrance of the town; by which the duke was made to understand that his friend had passed under pretext of fetching a midwife, whom he was to personate. Happily the town was still, and they reached in safety the dwelling of the friendly baker.

No sooner was the duke concealed in a garret, with such accommodations for food

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and repose as the circumstances would afford, than the baker, quick as thought, laid aside his holiday suit, assumed his working-dress, put the pillion out of sight, fed and rubbed down the horse, and then called up his son, whose duty it was to go to the mill for flour. Affecting to blame the young man for having overslept his time, the father busied himself in harnessing the horse to prevent his son observing that it had already been at work, and then hurried his departure and urged a quick return.

It was yet dark when he started; but he had five or six miles to go to the mill, and by the time he reached it, day began to dawn. On his return, he noticed the sick soldier by the road-side, enquired his destination, and offered him a lift, which was gratefully accepted, but with an expression of languor that proved a sufficient excuse for silence on the road. The young baker, too, was more intent on reaching home in good time to redeem his character with his father, than on beguiling the way

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with chat. They, therefore, soon reached home; the young man apparently not at all suspecting that his passenger was any other than he seemed to be.

The father was at hand, ostensibly to assist in unloading the cart, but really to conduct his protegé to the place of concealment already occupied by the disguised nobleman. There they remained through the day: at night, when the younger part of the family had retired to rest, the worthy host requested permission to assemble a few trusty friends to receive from the minister a word of exhortation, and to join in imploring the protection and blessing of God. This step seemed somewhat imprudent; but the influence of Christian love and confidence prevailed, and they were not betrayed. At the close of the meeting, the wanderers departed in peace, being conducted, in a new disguise, by one of the brethren to the next town, where arrangements had been made for their reception.

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Thus they continued resting in concealment by day, and passing on by night, according to some preconcerted device and arrangement, until they reached a safe asylum in Switzerland, where they remained some months. On hearing of the safe arrival in England of the young count and countess, and Laval and his daughter, they joined them there; and the Swiss minister afterwards took the charge of one of the churches in London, of which several were then formed by the French refugees.

The escape of the rest of the party, although ultimately accomplished, was attended with much greater difficulty than that already narrated. In the disguise of a pedlar or travelling-merchant, Laval made several journeys to Calais, chiefly on foot. His object was two-fold: to deposit property in the hands of a confidential friend there, and to engage a vessel to convey him to England.

At length, the removal of their valua-

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bles was effected; arrangements had been made for the progress of the count and the females in various disguises from town to town, and Laval was on the look-out for a vessel.

The spirited Marguerite took the lead in their march, being well acquainted with the manners of the peasantry of the different provinces through which they passed, and less likely to betray superiority inconsistent with the various characters they assumed.

On one occasion, as they were travelling in the holiday suit of peasants, the young count having a flute on which he played admirably, they ventured to join the village dance, in order to obtain refreshment, of which they stood in need, and had not the means of procuring without risk of detection. They had not been there more than half-an-hour, when the quick ear of Marguerite caught a rumour among the villagers that the old Duc de —— had certainly escaped, and that a reward was

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now offered for the apprehension of his nephew, who was supposed to know his retreat, and who had been traced on the road to Paris. Marguerite anxiously watched the close of the dance, and then, catching the attention of her friends, playfully said, "Come, my brother, it is time we should take our leave and pass on, or we shall not reach Alençon before the family of my uncle retire to rest: have you forgotten your engagement at the wedding of our cousin to-morrow morning? When you tune your flute, and sister Annette begins to foot it merrily, all engagements are lost in the pleasures of the present moment. Already the sun is descending, and the wood through which we have to pass is lonely."

Her hint was taken, and with some show of reluctance her assumed brother and sister complied with her suggestion and proceeded;—not, however, on the way to Alençon, which had been mentioned only to mislead persons in case sus-

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picion should have been excited, nor yet on that to Chartres, which was indeed their intended route,—but to return and conceal themselves in the retreat where they had passed the preceding night. There they remained two days almost without sustenance, except a little wild fruit which Marguerite ventured forth by night to procure.

This untoward incident defeated their arrangements; deprived them of the succours which they hoped to have received from friends, and compelled them to take a different and more fatiguing route to Calais. They, however, eluded their pursuers, and at length arrived at Calais, where they had the happiness of finding Laval, and a quiet asylum in the house of a humble artisan, to whom the friendly baker had directed them, and who received them "for the truth's sake," though at the peril of his own safety. There, too, they had the comfort of hearing of the safety of those most dear to them; news of

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their arrival at Lausanne having been conveyed by an agreed token: but this pleasure was to counterbalance the disappointment of learning that a vessel, on board of which a high price had been paid for their passage to England, had departed without them, and that they were likely to be detained in Calais several days before another could be obtained. The principal part of their property had been put on board; but Laval had had the precaution to consign it to a British merchant of high and honourable character, and well known as a favourer of the persecuted Protestants; it was therefore hoped that this would be secured for their use when they should be enabled to follow it: and they had concealed about them, in jewels, amply sufficient to provide, as far as wealth could provide, for their necessities for a much longer time than was likely to elapse before they should reach England.

A few hours after their arrival in Calais,

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the young countess fell sick: at first it was supposed that her disorder was occasioned by fatigue and anxiety, but it soon proved to be the small-pox. The necessity of concealment forbade their having recourse to medical skill; and, indeed, it was not considered safe for the poor Huguenots to employ the regular physicians, as many instances were known in which they cruelly neglected them as worthless heretics, or betrayed them into the hands of their persecutors. Every evil, however, has its attendant good: hence had arisen the necessity of persons professing the reformed religion, acquainting themselves with the practice of medicine, and either personally, or by their servants, administering to the poor around them. It was thus that Marguerite had attained considerable experience; and her simple skill, under the Divine blessing, availed to the recovery of her beloved lady.

Once more a vessel was secured, the females were already on board, and the

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young count was in the act of embarking when he was recognized: a violent scuffle ensued; he disabled his antagonist, and succeeded in getting on board, but not without a severe wound on the head. Before, however, the assailant recovered, Laval also had sprung on board, the vessel had put off, and was rapidly gliding towards England.

On landing in London, Laval immediately sought out the merchant, by whom they were honourably received, and from whom they experienced all the sympathy and assistance due to their characters and their misfortunes.

The wounded count, notwithstanding all the assiduous attention of his countess and her more experienced maid, became alarmingly ill. It was long, even under the most skilful surgeons that could be procured, before his fever abated; and, indeed, he continued through life more or less a sufferer in consequence of the injury he sustained. However, his compa-

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rative restoration to health, the safe arrival of their friends from Switzerland, and the liberty of worshipping God according to the dictates of their consciences without fear of man, seemed to the little party as more than compensation for all the injuries and privations sustained.

The property realized was amply sufficient to support them in elegance, though not in the splendour to which they had been accustomed in their native land. They assumed the family name, or rather dropped the title, as was usual with noble families among the refugees, and settled as private gentry, much respected among their English neighbours, and receiving even a degree of homage from those of their own country who were more or less acquainted with their real distinction and the noble sacrifices they had made in the cause of religion.

For many years the family continued to live in this easy competence. In course of time, the venerable head of the family

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died, also his faithful steward, and the worthy merchant to whom the management of their property had been intrusted.

The count, or, as he was now called, Monsieur, had never been distinguished for his knowledge of the common affairs of life. He was a man of integrity, benevolence, and general amiableness, but by no means a man of worldly wisdom. Naturally generous and confiding, and hitherto having fallen among those who did not abuse his confidence, he was too well fitted to become the dupe of a plausible and interested adviser; and such was the character of a man, who by having some concern in the affairs of the deceased merchant, acquired a knowledge of the property which had been so safely deposited in his hands. This artful person soon wormed himself into the friendship of the unsuspecting Frenchman. He proposed to him a plausible scheme for the advantageous investment of his money, too

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easily won him over to compliance, and possessed himself of the whole.

The consternation of the parties may be better conceived than described, when they found that their treacherous friend had plunged them from competence to destitution. It seemed almost impossible to make them comprehend the extent of their calamity, and that they must immediately relinquish their house and establishment, and rely on their own exertions for future support.

Madame and her faithful Marguerite were much more prompt in taking a clear view of the case than Monsieur. While he was yet paralyzed, they found time to deliberate, and decide, and act; and almost before he recovered his senses, he found himself in a genteel apartment, instead of a handsome mansion, but surrounded with the furniture to which he had been accustomed,—his wife,—yes, his noble countess,—engaged as a teacher of youth, and the faithful Marguerite their

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only remaining attendant. And in these circumstances they found that they were still happy in themselves and happy in each other; they still enjoyed the privileges of religion, the respect of their neighbours, the pleasures of mutual love and assistance, and the approving testimony of conscience.

Thus, for several years they experienced, though on a humbler scale than formerly, a good measure of worldly prosperity. Their hands were sufficient for them.

But fresh trials awaited them. Many of their old connexions died, or removed from the neighbourhood; or the families were all grown up, and their governess lost sight of; and rising families generally preferred schools kept by their own countrywomen, and where more modern systems were adopted; and Madame had the pain of seeing her school dwindle, and of experiencing a distressing falling off of her little income. Monsieur, too, had a

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serious illness, which involved them in fresh difficulties; and it became necessary to remove to a humbler apartment, and to dispose of a part of the furniture.

The indefatigable Marguerite also determined to learn some part of the weaving business, to which, by early rising, she could devote a few hours daily, and raise some little assistance towards the support of the household. From her early habits, she soon acquired a degree of aptitude which rendered her services valuable.

On learning her noble determination, Monsieur resolved not to be behind her. As his afflictions disqualified him for teaching, and indeed the small number of the pupils left no room for his services, he, too, applied for instruction and employment to a silk-manufacturer, to whom he was introduced by one who had known him in the days of his prosperity.

And thus for some years again a scanty pittance had been obtained: Monsieur going daily to Spitalfields to wind silk; Mar-

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guerite hastening to perform her domestic duties, and then to carry her master his breakfast, and herself to work as many hours as she could be spared from home; Madame devoting the day to her pupils; and at night the little family meeting, and enjoying together their humble meal, and the consciousness of having contributed to earn it.

But during the winter previous to the time when little Marie discovered or at least suspected the circumstances of destitution in which her governess was placed, Monsieur had been seized with rheumatism, which had disabled him from pursuing his former employ; the number of pupils had diminished; quarter-day was near at hand, and it seemed next to impossible to raise the rent.

Whether it was from excessive exertion, and scanty nourishment, Marguerite, who was indeed the staff of the family, fell ill of a low fever; and poor Madame, overwhelmed with fatigue, distress, and des-

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titution, would have sunk in despair but for the supports of religion. Like one of old, she found herself disposed to question, "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Will He be favourable no more? Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies?" but like him too, she chid her unbelief, and said, "This is my infirmity, yet I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. I have been young and now am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Thus she was endeavouring to calm her mind, and stay herself upon the promises of God, when relief most unexpectedly arrived at the suggestion of her considerate pupil.

After listening to the touching story of Madame, her benevolent visiter pressed upon her the acceptance of any neighbourly service, especially under her present circumstances of affliction.

"Thank you, thank you," replied the

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lively Frenchwoman, "your goodness has left me nothing to desire, I have all I need to pay my rent and to make my poor Marguerite comfortable."

"But Marguerite requires a physician, and you, Madame, need repose; the charge of your pupils is fatigue enough for you. You must allow me to afford you some assistance."

Madame discovered considerable reluctance in admitting even her friendly visiter to the interior of her domicile. However, kindness prevailed, and Mrs. R—— was conducted to the apartment of the sick servant. It was a garret; but the few articles of furniture it contained were, like those in the parlour, the remains of such as had been splendid and costly, and were evidently preserved with great care: an air of neatness and comfort pervaded the whole. In passing the lobby, Mrs. R—— caught a glance of another small room; a mere recess or closet, containing a bed, or rather a small couch; and, from an

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expression of anxious entreaty uttered by Marguerite, that she might be permitted to return to her own room, and that her dear master and mistress might get a night's repose, she was led to conclude that this recess was her usual apartment, and that now the master occupied it while the mistress watched by her bedside.

Mrs. R—— sighed when she thought of the indulgences to which these children of vicissitude had been accustomed in their youth. Hers was a soul in which sentiments of pity and plans of relief were always twin-born. Happily, Providence had bestowed on her the means of succouring the afflicted, and she had only to contrive the most delicate manner in which to execute her benevolent projects. Marguerite was very ill, yet, to Mrs. R—— it did not appear that the case was desperate. She was not free from delirium, yet was evidently soothed by seeing some one who sympathized with her beloved mistress, about whom she

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seemed far more concerned than for herself.

Mrs. R—— having obtained permission, immediately called upon an able and benevolent physician, who accompanied her to the sick-room. Having received from Mrs. R—— some account of the circumstances, he was led to conclude that illness was chiefly the result of over anxiety and fatigue, together with scanty nourishment; and he encouraged a hope, that, with proper attention, the patient would soon be restored to health. He, however, observed that Madame herself appeared much indisposed, and enjoined on her to retire to rest in another room, and accept the friendly offer of Mrs. R—— to permit a faithful old servant of hers to watch by Marguerite.

Then the truth came out: that for the last year, in order to reduce their rent, the best bed-room on a floor below, formerly occupied by Monsieur and Madame, had been let with its furniture, and that they

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and the worthy Marguerite had been reduced to the accommodations above described. The tenant, however, had given notice of quitting at the ensuing quarter-day; and this, which had been regarded as an additional calamity, proved a great convenience. For the few days that remained, the best arrangements were made that circumstances would permit, and then the noble tenants were reinstated in the possession of their comfortable apartment and handsome furniture, without fear as to meeting the rent.

As the physician and Mrs. R—— descended the staircase, they met the poor old gentleman, oppressed with rheumatism and asthma, scarcely able to hobble up stairs, yet, having been endeavouring to gain a trifle towards the support of his afflicted little household. His case, too, was attended to by the benevolent physician, and, with judicious attention, proper nourishment, and suitable repose, all were soon restored to health and comfort.

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Nor was the benevolent interest excited on behalf of the French family confined to temporary relief. When Mrs. R—— returned from her first visit, Marie and Pierre impatiently waited her report. Before, however, she would gratify their curiosity, she dispatched her old servant with wine and such other comforts as the physician had directed, or as her own benevolent heart could suggest.

Marie wept at the tale of hardship and suffering. Pierre listened with profound attention. It was not till the close that their aunt informed them of the real quality of the parties. Marie's joy was then unbounded, she clapped her hands and exclaimed, "Now, Pierre! that is all right! they are French! they are Protestants! they are nobility! now what will you do?"

"I will do what I can," replied Pierre, with gravity, having first noted down every particular of the name, title, and residence of the parties. "I must return

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home now; I will come and see you again in three days, and let you know if I can do anything. Aunt, I am sure you will be so good as to see that these poor people do not want any comfort, and allow me to contribute this trifle to their relief.

Pierre waited not for thanks, but hastened to the prosecution of his benevolent scheme. Young as he was, his talents for business had already discovered themselves. He was placed with an uncle, the head of one of the largest silk-manufactories in Spitalfields; and by his thoughtfulness, promptitude, and punctuality, had rendered himself so valuable, that he was already intrusted with bookkeeping, and conducting the correspondence as a confidential clerk. Not only did the mercantile concerns of the establishment pass under his inspection, but also the accounts of a number of benevolent societies, chiefly for the assistance of the poor French Refugees and their descendants, of which his

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uncle was treasurer. To Pierre was assigned the duty of keeping these accounts, of corresponding with other gentlemen of the committee, and of receiving and registering petitions for assistance.

A meeting was to be held three days afterwards, of the Committee of Distribution of a Royal Fund, by which pensions were granted on a scale adapted to the former condition of the pensioners. They were divided into three classes: *Bourgeoisie*, or common people; *Ecclesiastique*, or ministers, their widows, and families; and *Noblesse*, or the nobility, and their descendants; and the pension varied from three guineas a year to forty guineas.

The day on which this happened, was a holiday; not a public holiday, but one confined to the manufactory; perhaps given in honour of the master's birthday, or some such thing; and Pierre on his return found, as he expected, that his uncle had gone to spend the day in the country, and was not expected to return to town till the

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next morning. It was the last day on which petitions could be admitted. Nothing discouraged, however, Pierre sat down and drew up three petitions, of the count, the countess, and Marguerite Laval, stating in simple but forcible language the circumstances of each. This done, the indefatigable youth trudged off to Walthamstow, (his uncle's country residence,) and obtained his sanction and signature to the reception of the petitions on the proper day, as well as a donation of five guineas for the present relief of the parties. He was urged to stay and sleep there; but no, he must hasten back, as he had something to attend to early in the morning.

Next morning, when the warehouse opened at nine o'clock, he was ready to take his seat at the desk; but he had already been round to the several members of the committee, and interested them in the cause. All promised their support to the zealous young petitioner; and most of them gave him a private donation, with

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reference also to other influential French gentlemen likely to favour the cause.

No sooner was the warehouse closed, than he again went forth on his benevolent errand, with a book in which he had inserted the particulars of the case, and the subscriptions already received.

So successful were his exertions, and such was the interest excited, that on the evening of the day on which the committee met, he had the pleasure of communicating to his little cousin the amount of private contributions as exceeding a hundred pounds! and that Monsieur and Madame were each placed on the highest scale of Nobility pensioners; and Marguerite on the highest scale of the "Bourgeoisie!" Doubtless that was one of the happiest moments in the twelve years' courtship of Pierre and Marie; and one to which they could, through after life, recur with unmingled pleasure.

The joint annual income of the worthy French family now exceeded ninety

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pounds; and they often declared that they felt themselves as well provided and as happy as ever they had done in the splendid scenes of nobility. Madame continued her school a few years longer; but Monsieur no more returned to his humble occupation of silk-winding; and Marguerite, on her recovery, devoted her whole time to the comfort of her beloved master and mistress, and in assisting the latter in her embroidery and fan-mounting, at which, in the days of deepest distress, Madame had toiled laboriously during the intervals of school-hours, to add a trifle to their scanty pittance, but which now formed an agreeable occupation for her leisure hours, and, for which, through the interest of her friends, she could generally obtain a liberal remuneration. Each of the three lived to a good old age, and died in peace. Madame, who was the survivor, left Pierre her executor; and some relics of her old curiosities are still preserved in his family.

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THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES;

OR, THE SEPARATED CHILD.

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THE VANITY OF HUMAN WISHES;

OR, THE SEPARATED CHILD.

"SURELY man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain. He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." Psalm xxxix. 6.

In every age this sentiment of Sacred Writ has been repeated and exemplified. In every rank and condition of life, persons wish for something they do not possess, and on which they imagine their happiness depends; and in some few instances—as if to teach by example that happiness consists in thoughts more than

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in things, in a mind contented with such things as we have, rather than in obtaining such things as we desire—individuals have been permitted to realize the very objects of their fondest wishes, and have proved them to be but "vanity and vexation of spirit."

About the middle of the last century, a widow woman, between thirty and forty years of age, constantly took her station with a barrow or stand of fruit at the corner of Hanover-Street, Long-Acre; at that time a very respectable part of London, though of late years much deteriorated. This person was remarkably neat and clean in her appearance, civil in her deportment, and honest in her dealings. Her stall was regularly resorted to by the neighbouring householders, and by gentlemen passing along to the inns of court. She was surrounded by several healthy intelligent-looking children, with fair and ruddy complexions, and sandy hair. The lock that passed over her own fair fore-

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head, peeping from beneath her close widow's cap and hood, was of the same colour. Her countenance, too, was of the same complexion, but grief had faded its bloom, and fixed a pensive sadness of expression, which seemed to indicate, not merely the traces of past sorrow, but the pressure of present gloom.

Except when attending to her customers, the widow was constantly employed in needlework, which she performed with great neatness and dexterity, and of which she generally obtained a supply from the neighbouring families, who knew her honesty and industry, and were pleased to encourage her laudable efforts for the maintenance of her family. Her eldest boy assisted her in the sale of her fruit, and carried it home to the customers. Two girls remained at home in a court near at hand, managing the little household affairs of the family, and assisting their mother in needlework. One or other of them might often be seen coming up to her, to

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fix their work or to examine their progress. Two little ones much younger, in fine weather played near their mother, being literally, for security, fastened to her apron-string. In cold or rainy weather, they were left at home in the care of their sisters, the eldest boy being occasionally sent in to see that all were safe and well.

An air of superiority marked the manners of the whole family. The children were affectionate and obedient, and never were seen playing with other children in the street; and the mother spoke not, except to her children and her customers, and then always with a degree of mildness and propriety by no means common among persons of her class. At dusk, the whole family assisted in removing their little store; and the evening was spent in gleaning such information as was within their reach, either at home or at an evening school.

A highly respectable gilder and japan-

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ner* in the neighbourhood, observing the activity, intelligence, and civility of the eldest lad, offered to take him as an apprentice without premium. The offer was accepted by the widow and her son with tears of gratitude; and Francis Knowles was, after a suitable trial, bound apprentice to his benefactor, Mr. Russell. It was thus the Widow Knowles was introduced to the notice of the female part of Mr. Russell's family, and occasional intercourse subsisted between them. The quiet unobtrusive manners of the widow, and the considerate, delicate, unostentatious benevolence of the ladies were in perfect congruity, and that sort of silent compact was at once esta-

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* Japanning on wood was at that time much practised, and highly fashionable. Few considerable houses were without some articles of japan furniture, such as cabinets, drawers, chests, tables, or clock-cases. Many genteel houses had a room entirely furnished with such furniture, and called the "The japan room." Japanning was an ingenious, genteel, and profitable business.

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blished that secures a reciprocity of good offices as occasions arise.

Circumstances in life continually occur to remind us of our mutual dependence. There is perhaps a degree of pride, mingled even with the feelings of benevolence that lead persons in the higher walks of life to think with pleasure of contributing to the wants and comforts of others; but the dispensations of Providence are sometimes calculated to convince them that they are quite as liable to need succour as they are able to impart it.

It was thus with the wealthy family of the Russells. They had repeatedly encouraged the Widow Knowles, in case of sickness or need, to inform them of her circumstances, and allow them to contribute to her relief. But sickness first visited their own dwelling; and the neighbourly attentions of the poor widow proved a source of comfort beyond what money could have commanded. The aged mother of Mrs. Russell was seized with a

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paralytic stroke, which reduced her to a state of helplessness, but left her mental consciousness and sensibility as acute as ever. Mrs. Russell was herself in delicate health, and unable to endure the fatigues of nursing. Her nieces, who resided with her, were young and inexperienced, and the introduction of a stranger and a hireling would have been most uncongenial both with the retiring sensitiveness of the old lady, and the anxious tenderness of her family.

At the moment of her seizure, while her son-in-law was carrying her up stairs, Francis was dispatched to call in a physician. As he ran along, without losing a moment, he said in passing, "Mother, run in, and comfort mistress."

The summons was promptly obeyed. In an instant the children were directed to carry in the stock, and the mother was judiciously and assiduously employed in attending on her sick neighbour.

On reviving a little, the old lady seemed

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at once to appreciate the kindness and worth of her voluntary attendant, and to desire the continuance of her good offices. A few words explained the sentiments and wishes of the parties. Stimulated by gratitude, the widow consented to abandon her trade of fruit vending, and became an inmate in the house of her friends; still pursuing at intervals her needlework, and daily attending to the little concerns of her family, for whose wants those she served made ample provision.

The old lady lingered nearly two years; and at her death left the widow a liberal acknowledgment of services too valuable for money alone to command or requite.

But it was not in pecuniary matters alone that this engagement proved truly profitable to the widow. The family with whom she dwelt, and especially the object of her immediate attentions, was eminently pious. Her early years had been privileged with the ministry of the celebrated Richard Baxter, and her mind and

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conversation retained a holy savour of its first seasoning. The passages of Scripture and hymns with which her memory was stored, the reading in which she delighted, and the sentiments she expressed and appropriated, proved the happy means of enlightening the mind of her attendant, directing and satisfying her enquiries after the way of salvation as revealed in the Gospel, and leading her to realize the constant presence and sympathy of a gracious Father and a merciful High Priest, on whom she was encouraged to cast her cares, and with whom she might confide her sorrows, and meet unfailing sympathy and succour.

It was thus, too, that she in some degree lost her habitual reserve, and communicated to her sympathizing friends the burden that pressed so heavily upon her spirits. The poor woman was employed in altering a garment which her second girl had outgrown, to make it fit the elder of the little ones, when one of the Miss

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Russells casually observed, "What a great difference in the size of these two children! had you none between them?"

"*Yes, I had,*" replied the widow, with a deep and peculiar expression, that at once precluded all further enquiry, and conveyed to the delicate mind of the young lady a tacit reproof for having inadvertently touched a tender string.

A long silence ensued, during which tears rolled down the mother's cheeks in rapid succession, and her needle was now drawn out with a quick and irregular jerk, then remained still for a second or two, as indicating momentary abstraction of mind on some painful subject. It seemed a relief to the whole party when the attention of the nurse was called to the invalid; after which she gradually resumed her wonted composure.

The same day, one of the young ladies, by desire of her afflicted relative, was reading aloud the well-known narrative of the author of the Pilgrim's Progress,

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entitled, "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners." As she read, the nurse unconsciously dropped her needlework, fixed her eyes in mute attention, and, after a considerable time, exclaimed, "If that is true, there is hope even for me, though I am no better than a murderer!"

A thrill of horror passed through the little company as she uttered the words, and a momentary pause ensued. Mrs. Russell broke the silence by replying, "Yes, assuredly there is hope for you, be your crimes what they may; for 'this is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners. He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him: and him that cometh he will in no wise cast out.' On this firm and glorious basis alone, can any one of us hope for salvation, however externally correct and virtuous our deportment; and from that hope the vilest is not excluded. But perhaps, my friend, you needlessly distress your-

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self by assuming the charge of actual guilt which does not belong to you. I know nothing of the circumstances of the death of your child or children, but, from what I have seen of your tenderness towards those who survive, I feel assured that at most you can but have to reproach yourself with unintentional inadvertence."

"No! mine was a deliberate crime. The temptation was strong, and I wickedly yielded to it. The Scripture says, 'Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb?' I have not actually murdered my child. I have never, no never, forgotten it—but—I SOLD IT!"

This appalling statement awakened intense interest in the minds of those in whose presence it was made; but delicacy restrained them from pressing for the painful particulars. In course of time, however, as the mind of the widow was more fully brought under the balmy influence of the consolations of religion, she

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could refer with a degree of composure to the past transactions and events of her life, and communicated to her friends the following particulars.

"My husband was a hackney-coachman. He served a hard master, one who allowed him but a small pittance for his labour, while he rigorously exacted from him a full compensation for every little accident—such as breaking a square of glass—and exercised no consideration towards him in case of illness, which not unfrequently arose from exposure to the weather.

"Our portion was very scanty, but we were affectionate and happy in each other. I added what I could to our little income by needlework; but my time was chiefly occupied with my children. It was often a grief to us both to see them so scantily fed and clothed, and especially to feel ourselves quite destitute of the means of giving them education. We certainly strove to the uttermost to get a living;

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this was right: but we sometimes indulged ourselves in idle wishes; this I know and feel was wrong.

"One of my husband's fellow-servants got a prize in the lottery, which enabled him to purchase a coach and horses of his own. We struggled hard, and denied ourselves every comfort, to purchase a sixteenth of a ticket, hoping that we might have as good luck as our neighbour, but our adventure proved a blank. We reproached ourselves for having spent our hard earnings on an empty chance, and resolved no more to engage in such speculations.

"A neighbour in our court had a pretty little girl, the age of our eldest boy. A lady for whom the mother worked, took a fancy to the child, clothed her, and put her to school. When I saw this child come nicely dressed to visit her parents, and heard how well she could read, I sighed as I looked at my own ill-clad and untaught children, and wished that some

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rich lady would take a fancy to one of them. Thus was the leaven of discontent, pride, and vain desire, working in my heart, and preparing it to receive the suggestions of the tempter who came to propose to me sinful means of gaining my wishes.

"I was shortly expecting the birth of my fourth child, and in circumstances of more than ordinary destitution, (my husband having been laid up with rheumatism,) when a very fine and elegantly dressed lady, about forty years of age, called at our house, and offered me some needlework to do. I joyfully undertook the work, and engaged to have it ready by a certain time, when she promised to call for it. The lady behaved in a very kind and condescending manner, and took great notice of the children, to each of whom she gave money. She also enquired of me how I was provided for my approaching trial. Finding that I was badly off, she made me a present then, and promised to bring

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me a supply of clothing; observing, that she felt a particular sympathy for me, from being herself in the like situation. The prospect she said was appalling enough to her, though she had every comfort and luxury at command; and what must it be to one in circumstances like mine?

"Her generosity and her fair speeches quite won my heart, and I really looked upon her visit as a seasonable interposition of Heaven on our behalf. With a lightsome heart I set about the work, and took the greatest pains to perform it as neatly as possible. In a few days, as appointed, the lady come to fetch it. The footman who followed brought a large bundle of clothing for all the family. He was then ordered to take back the bundle of work, place it in the carriage, and drive on to an appointed place—the direction I did not catch—where the lady would call presently. Having dismissed the footman, the lady gave my children money, and

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desired them to go and buy themselves some cakes and fruit. As soon as we were left alone, she asked me if I was willing to part with my expected babe, for its very great advantage. It would be brought up, she assured me, with the utmost tenderness and care; well educated, and amply provided for; and that the transaction, if agreed to, would secure good friends to me and my husband, who would make us comfortable for the rest of our days, and enable us to provide for our other children. The only conditions required on our part, were the surrender of the child as soon as it was born, implicit obedience to all the directions we should receive, and strict secrecy as to the whole transaction. In return, she engaged to provide every necessary attendance and comfort for my lying-in, and to give me one hundred guineas for my child if it should prove a girl, and two hundred if it should prove a boy and sandy headed.

"I observed that her hair, though dis-

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guised with powder, was of that cast, and it struck me that she wished to pass off the child as her own. O, that I had then considered the sin of attempting to impose upon others, whoever they might be, and had refused to lend my aid to any scheme of imposition! Then had I spared myself the awful guilt of selling my own flesh and blood. But alas! I was dazzled with her splendid offers. I fancied that I had only the welfare of my family at heart; that my child would be incomparably better off than it could be with us; that no one would be injured, and the interests of all promoted; and instead of at once rejecting the temptation, I suffered myself to enquire whether I should be permitted to see my child.

"'Yes,' she replied, 'I should have frequent opportunities of seeing it; and she assured me it should never be denied me whenever I might wish it.'

"Whatever other question I asked, and whatever difficulty I suggested, she had

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a plausible answer at hand; and, at length, I promised to consult my husband, and give her an answer. Perhaps if we had been allowed an opportunity of talking it over in our quiet moments alone, we should have rejected the wicked proposal; but, unfortunately, my husband just then came in to dinner. The lady immediately seized her opportunity, talked to him of the advantage of his child, and of his family in general, presented the one hundred guineas, held out the prospect of another, and induced us both to sign an agreement to comply with her wicked desires. Having obtained this engagement, she proceeded to inform me that the person whom she had engaged to attend me was a woman highly celebrated for skill and experience, and employed by the first ladies in London, and that she should desire her to call on me in a day or two that we might become acquainted with each other. Every thing, she said, was intrusted to her management; and di-

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rected me, in case of indisposition, immediately to send for her, and by no means to call in any of my neighbours. Then with many kind and affable speeches she took her leave.

"'One hundred guineas in gold!' exclaimed my husband, 'and the chance of another! Who would have thought of our being worth so much?'

"'True,' I replied, 'but then we are to part with our child for it.'

"'Well, the child will be better taken care of than we could have done for it; besides, this will enable us to take care of all the rest.'

"'I wish,' said I, 'we did but know where the child is going to.'

"'Next time the lady calls,' returned my husband, 'I will watch her home, I wish I had thought of doing so now. However, as you are to go and see it when you please, you will be sure to know all about it then. Come, don't make yourself uneasy about the matter, but let us

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think about turning to account what we have got in our hands.'

"Then we pleased ourselves with planning one scheme and another; but every now and then a misgiving thought would cross one of our minds—'Is it not an unnatural thing to part with our own child for money? are we not assisting this lady in some scheme of deception which may call down the vengeance of Heaven on all concerned?'

"But we had not much time to deliberate. The next day the midwife called upon me, and engaged my attention with representations of the high promotion of my child, and congratulations on my singular good fortune in attracting the notice of so honourable, wealthy, and liberal a friend. My husband, too, was full of schemes for the employment of our property possessed and expected; and thus the time was taken up day after day.

"Several schemes had been proposed, but nothing was fixed on when my time of

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trial arrived. It was not much more than a week after the guilty transaction, but I had scarcely known an hour's rest between. If I dropped asleep, I awoke in a fright, either imagining that thieves were in the house seizing upon our ill-gotten treasure, or else dreaming that my child was snatched from my arms, and dashed to pieces before my face. At length, my child was born. It was a fine healthy sandy-headed boy.

The woman brought with her a dead infant, which she left; she hardly allowed me once to look upon my own; then gave my husband a purse containing the remainder of the horrid price of blood, and hurried away to her employers. She soon returned, and paid me every possible attention. The whole was but the transaction of a night. I had been about on the preceding evening; and in the morning, the neighbours were informed that I had been delivered of a dead child, and was too unwell for any one to be admitted

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to see me. This, indeed, was true; for though every circumstance attending my condition had been as favourable as possible, the agitated state of my mind, together with the absence of my little one, who should have relieved me of the abundant provision which nature had provided for his sustenance, brought on a milk-fever, and placed my life for several days in imminent danger.

"As I slowly recovered, the extreme agitation of my spirits subsided; but a settled depression ensued. I was unable to take pleasure in my children, and still more disinclined to enter into the schemes of my husband for the employment of our property. It was with a mixture of horror and indifference I learned that he had purchased the lease of a public-house, and that as soon as I was able to be removed we were to enter upon it.

The only thing that could inspire me with a wish for recovery, was the hope of seeing my child. With this hope, the

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woman who attended me constantly stimulated me, and I believe it tended more to my restoration than all the advice and attention I received; though in these respects I could not have been better off if I had been the first lady in the land.

"At the expiration of six weeks my wish was accomplished. My attendant came in a carriage, and took me first to church to return thanks for my delivery; but, Oh! what feelings of anguish mingled with my expressions of gratitude. We then proceeded in the carriage, the blinds of which were instantly closed, and after riding about an hour or more, were set down in the court-yard of a noble mansion.

"My companion, who seemed quite familiar with the house and its inmates, conducted me by the back stair-case to an elegant apartment, where my baby lay asleep in a cradle richly ornamented and lined with white satin. A wet nurse and another were in attendance. My companion introduced me, saying I was a

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patient of hers whom she had brought out for an airing this fine morning, and who would be much pleased with a sight of the little lord.

"The upper nurse rung for refreshments. Cake, wine, and chocolate, were presently brought by a footman, and handed round on silver waiters. The splendour of the whole scene far exceeded anything I had before witnessed; but it had no charms for me: my eager eyes were fixed on the cradle. I longed for the babe to awake, and could scarcely refrain from turning aside the coverlet to look at him: but my companion gave me a significant frown whenever she perceived my impatience, and I restrained myself as well as I could. At length, he awoke. One nurse took him up, and carried him to the fire a minute, while the other prepared to suckle him.

"O, he was a lovely babe as ever eyes beheld! I sprang forward and attempted to kiss him, but the nurse forbade me, say-

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ing, her Ladyship never suffered any person to kiss the child.

"'Then do,' I exclaimed, 'let me take him in my arms only for one moment!'

"'No,' both the nurses replied, 'it was as much as their places were worth, if their lady should come into the nursery and find the child intrusted to any person even for one moment.'

"I could scarcely restrain myself; and when I saw my babe suck the breast of another woman, while I felt in my own bosom the rush that nature sent for its supply, a sudden giddiness came over me; my eyes became dim; my forehead burned; it seemed as if my brain would burst through it; a deathly chill and paleness succeeded, and for a few moments I lost consciousness.

"As soon as I came to myself, and almost before I was able to walk down stairs, my companion hurried me away: she was, doubtless, afraid of my inadvertently breathing out a hint of the horrid

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secret with which my mind was charged; the nurses also observed that their lady would be dreadfully alarmed, and exceedingly angry, if she suspected that any one had been unwell in the nursery.

"Thus short and unsatisfying was my first interview with my child,—and—it was the last. Again we took an hour's ride with closed blinds, and were set down at the house where I had been directed to send for the midwife. There the carriage was dismissed, and a hackney-coach was called, in which I was conveyed home.

"My conductress expressed her hope that when I next visited the little nobleman I should have recovered my strength, and be enabled to command my feelings. She promised to call for me in three weeks or a month; but told me, if I felt particularly desirous of seeing the child before that time, I might call at her house. Thus we parted.

"Very shortly afterwards we removed to the Phœnix. The bustle attending our

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removal and entering on a new line of life, though it could not divert my mind from the one painful subject by which it was engrossed and oppressed, so far occupied my time and attention, that I had not an opportunity of leaving home, or my own feelings would have led me to avail myself of the permission granted long before the expiration of the time appointed; but three weeks had passed, and I began fully to expect the promised call. Each morning I was encouraged to prosecute my business with a degree of cheerful activity, that I might be clean and at leisure by the time of my friend's arrival, whom I was now daily hoping to see.

"One day passed, and I conjectured that her own engagements had prevented:—another—and the weather accounted for her non-appearance. But hope deferred makes the heart sick; and at the close of the fourth week I could wait no longer, but went to her residence. Imagine what was my consternation and distress to find

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that the person whom I sought was quite unknown there. A lady answering my description had, indeed, taken furnished apartments for a few weeks, but she seldom occupied them. The people of the house were quite ignorant of her profession and her stated residence. They recollected her being there a month before, having a fire lighted, and provisions brought in; that on the same day she came in accompanied by another female, they did not recollect the person, it might have been me, they could not say. After staying a short time, the lady and her companion went away in a hackney-coach; shortly after which the lady returned, and discharged the lodgings, and they had no further trace of her. It was but too plain that the apartment had been taken merely to serve the purpose, while it was necessary to keep up intercourse with me; and when that end was accomplished, to enable her to conceal herself and her employers from discovery.

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"Sad and heart-broken I returned home, and communicated to my husband my cruel disappointment. He endeavoured to cheer me with the hope that we should surely at some time or other see some of the parties, any one of whom I could not fail to recollect, when by tracing them we might gain a clue to our lost child. Thus we were still kept hoping.

"Every hour of leisure that I could possibly command, I walked with my children to the parks, or some other public part where the carriages of the nobility and gentry frequently pass, and eagerly pryed into every carriage where there were children, also watching those who were carried by their nurses. Often have I followed for a mile or two such as I imagined bore the slightest resemblance to my own; and never have I neglected an opportunity of looking into the court-yard of any great houses that I happened to pass; but never have I seen that in which I once alighted, nor ever, to my

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knowledge, have I had a glimpse of my own child.

"The more hopeless my prospect became, the more ardently my mind was set upon it. I felt as if I loved that child more intensely than all the rest, and regarded myself as so unnatural a mother, that I had no right to take pleasure in my other children. Whatever I could do for their comfort and improvement I did; but it was rather as an act of duty than as an indulgence and delight.

"All this time we attained a good measure of worldly prosperity: our business prospered so well, that my husband was able to add to it the purchase of a hackney-coach, which he sometimes drove himself, and sometimes employed a man whom we kept in our service.

"We had now attained, and more than attained, the summit of our wishes. I told you how vainly we had been used to indulge them; but they were all fulfilled. We possessed a hackney-coach of our

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own, and a better pair of horses than those which belonged to our neighbour; and in addition to this we had a flourishing business of another kind. One of our children had been taken by a rich lady, and was, if living, living in plenty and grandeur, far beyond those of the child I used to envy. My other children, too, were all well fed, well clothed, and put in the way, as they become old enough, for a good education. But I can truly say the accomplishment of my wishes did not make me happy. I had plenty of everything; but so far from taking pleasure in it, I continually sighed for the days when we lived in the court, scantily fed, scantily clothed, and scantily furnished; but where we had peace of mind, and the sight of all our children.

"O how gladly would I have given up all we possessed, and all the splendid prospects of my unknown child, could I have brought him back to share the happy poverty to which he was born!

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"My husband often reproved me for the gloom on my spirits, and called me discontented. He had for a considerable time shared my concern, but business and company by degrees wore out the impression from his mind—a mother's love is indelible. But oh! how little of a mother's heart could have been mine, when I consented to part with my babe for sordid gain! It seemed, however, as if I had acted thus in a fit of madness, and that the irretrievable consequences of my mad act were fixed with undiminishing weight on the whole of my future rational existence.

"In course of time I was again in the family way. At this circumstance, my husband was highly pleased, hoping that I should consider my loss as replaced, and cease to fret about the past. With me it was widely different. All I experienced and anticipated only revived with fresh anguish the recollections of past events. Both memory and imagination preyed

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upon my health, and it seemed very doubtful whether I should be brought through my trial.

"When my child was born, instead of being a plump healthy babe, like all before, it had the withered careworn features of a decrepid old man, and lived but two days. Of this I was unmindful, if not altogether unconscious; for again a milk-fever came on, which placed my life in extreme peril, and from which I slowly and imperfectly recovered.

"In little more than a year, a similar trial was attended with the loss of my child, and equal danger to myself. My health and strength were so greatly and permanently impaired, that it seemed much more likely for me to sink in a decline, than that I should ever live to be the mother of another living child. However, it proved otherwise. In course of time, I had the two little ones who are now living; but I was not able to suckle either of them. The little girl is more than six

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years younger than her sister. Thus it is, Miss, that there is the difference in their size that you noticed. The little boy was born not long before his poor father's death, and about the time that we were brought back to our former circumstances. For our wealth and prosperity did not last very long. That which is gained by sinful means is not likely to be long enjoyed, or to have the blessing of God resting upon it.

"Our new line of life exposed my poor husband to the snares of company and liquor; and perhaps uneasiness of mind, greater than I was aware of, led him to acquire the destructive habit of drinking to excess. Thus he ruined his health, neglected his business, and was imposed upon by an unfaithful servant. The man whom he employed proved an unprincipled villain, and defrauded us of our property in every possible way,—in ways indeed which would have been impracticable had a proper superintendence been maintained. While my husband was active, industrious,

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and attentive, he prospered; but, when once he became the companion of the customers, instead of their attendant, everything declined. I must, however, take a great portion of the blame to myself. Frequent illness indeed, disabled me, but constant depression of spirits still more entirely disinclined me, for taking an active part in the business; and I was an almost unconcerned spectator of the progress of ruin.

"It is, perhaps, impossible to convey an idea, to those who never experienced anything of the kind, how entirely one engrossing, overwhelming burden on the mind and conscience, disables for attention to the common interests and duties of life. Such was the state of my mind, that the health and comfort of my husband and my children alone could interest me; everything besides was regarded with listless indifference. I saw with concern the swollen limbs and pallid countenance of my husband; but I cared very

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little for finding that we must give up the house, and return to comparative obscurity; indeed, I rather found reason to rejoice in the change, as it tended to withdraw my husband from the injurious society and habits to which he had become addicted.

"As the house was well-accustomed, we parted with it on such terms as left us, after clearing all our debts, in possession of the hackney-coach, and decent furniture enough to stock a small house—that which I still occupy.

"Had it been possible to enjoy comfort with minds not at rest, we might now have been comfortable. The coach afforded a maintenance for the family. My husband being now obliged to attend to it and drive it himself, was kept fully employed, which was a real advantage both to his health and his habits; and our moving in a humble sphere, and being neglected by neighbours, who during our prosperity had professed great friendship, was more than

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recompensed by the quietness of our little dwelling, our leisure for each other's society, and our freedom from the anxiety, the bustle, and the unpleasant associations of a public-house. But the painful remembrance of that one criminal transaction, anxious yet fruitless enquiries and speculations as to the circumstances of our lost child, and reflections on the consequences of that affair, (for to it we could not but trace the death of the two succeeding children,) were never long absent from either of our minds; they disturbed our hours of rest, and embittered those of enjoyment in the society of each other and of our remaining children.

"To this disturbed and restless state of feeling I ascribe it, that my poor husband was again drawn into the snares from which, perhaps, he had but imperfectly escaped. He became a frequenter of the public-house. I need hardly say that this soon brought us still lower in our worldly circumstances. We were obliged to part

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with the coach, and my husband again drove it as the servant of another. Thus we were replaced, as to outward things, in the very circumstances in which our unexpected prosperity first found us; but oh! we had lost that which had formerly sweetened and soothed our poverty,—peace of mind, and happiness in each other!

"On looking back, there is but one circumstance at all tending to dash the bitterness of recollection. We did not upbraid or attempt to shake off from ourselves any portion of the criminality; but each was rather disposed to soothe the feelings of the other by taking home the largest share of blame.

"This *is* a satisfaction to my mind: my poor husband was not driven to his courses by my unkindness or reproach, though I fear he was by my dejection of spirits, as well as by the reflections of his own mind. His health, which had greatly improved, soon gave way; and, although he

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was again induced to forsake his bad habits, his constitution was too much impaired to rally again. After many weeks of decline, he was taken off suddenly at last, as I believe is often the case in complaints attended with dropsy. It was a sad, sad blow to me; especially as I could not but trace back to our one guilty deed, the beginning of those evil courses which occasioned his premature death.

"My poor children were now entirely dependent on me; and it is a great mercy that I had them to care for. This alone roused me to exertion, and kept me from utter despair.

"You know how God has been graciously pleased to bless my poor endeavours, and to raise me up kind friends, and thus to provide for the fatherless and widow. Among all his mercies, I can never be thankful enough for being brought into this family, not merely for the sake of my child's worldly interests, but, because I have, I trust, learned something

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of the power of true religion to sustain the mind under the afflictions of life, and even under the anguish of a wounded spirit. I have now no expectation of ever meeting my unknown child on earth; but I will never cease to pray that God may guide his steps, and that 'through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, with the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,' we may at last meet in a better world."

* * * * * * *

Years had elapsed since the Widow Knowles related the touching particulars of her history. The old lady was long since dead; the young ladies married and rearing families; among them and their friends Mrs. Knowles finding constant employment as a monthly or occasional nurse, a business which she had followed ever since her attendance on the old lady. The family of Mrs. Knowles was variously disposed of. Her son Francis, having served his apprenticeship, was

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much esteemed as a journeyman by the partner and successor of Mr. Russell; and his younger brother was admitted as an apprentice. One daughter was married, and the two others filled respectable situations in families.

In the house of her eldest daughter, Mrs. Knowles had an apartment which she occupied during the short intervals of leisure which her frequent engagements afforded. It was during one of these intervals that she was applied to in an emergency to nurse a gentleman at the point of death. An air of mystery attended the application, which caused a degree of hesitancy in complying with it. The apprehension awakened in the mind of the nurse, was that of small-pox, or some other infectious disease, by coming in contact with which, she would be unfitted for attending in her domestic capacity elsewhere. But on receiving from the highly respectable surgeon who applied for her services, a positive assurance that the

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malady was of a very different nature, and one which could in no way injure or endanger her, or any person with whom she was connected, her scruples were overcome, and her compliance obtained.

She accompanied the surgeon, who, on the way, informed her that the patient had been wounded in a duel, and was lying in a very precarious state near the spot where the lamentable occurrence had taken place; that the life of his antagonist also was in peril, and both were in custody until the event in either instance should transpire. The seconds had escaped, and the names and rank of the principals were kept secret. They were such, however, as would ensure a liberal recompence for services rendered.

It was with a sad heart the nurse entered upon her duties. Her tender spirit bled when she thought of the distress into which two families were plunged by one rash and guilty act of two fine young noblemen, (for such it appeared the parties

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were,) from a false sense of honour, reducing themselves to the disgrace of being watched as felons by the officers of justice; above all, of two immortal spirits daring the tremendous hazard of driving each other uncalled and unprepared into the presence of God the Judge of all!

Oppressed by these melancholy reflections, she took her station at the bed-side of the patient committed to her care, who was sometimes dozing in the restless slumber procured by opiates, sometimes bursting forth in the incoherent ravings of delirium, and anon sinking into a state of exhaustion, in which it seemed as if nature would expire. But grave reflections soon gave place to intense anxiety and absorbing interest in the charge assigned to her. All other considerations seemed lost in the possibility of contributing to the recovery, or even to the alleviation of the sufferings, of the object of her solicitude.

Only a few days elapsed before the other party was pronounced out of danger,

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and, in consequence, the attending officers were discharged from their surveillance in the antechamber of my Lord—for by that title the surgeons constantly addressed their patient, but in an under tone—while, by the people of the house he was spoken of as Mr. Rashleigh, and his medicines were so directed.

A few days later, hopes were entertained that with him also the crisis had passed, and that his progressive recovery might be anticipated. He was still, however, in a state of extreme weakness, and all conversation was strictly prohibited. His faithful nurse alone still sat by his bed-side, watching his wishes, and quietly improving the time by reading her Bible, or the narrative that first suggested to her own mind hope and consolation, "Grace abounding to the chief of sinners."

The advancing recovery of the patient was evidenced first by a grateful consciousness of the attentions of his nurse, and an anxiety that her fatigues should

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be alleviated, and her kindness amply rewarded. He next began to make rational enquiries of the surgeons as to the circumstances of his family, and the safety of his antagonist. In the latter particular, his mind was immediately set at rest by the assurance that he was nearly recovered: the former was rather evaded than answered. The pleasing assurance, however, seemed to occupy his mind, and divert his attention from the other topic, which could not have been so satisfactorily met.

By degrees it was gently intimated to him that both his parents were in some degree indisposed. His father had some months before experienced a slight paralytic seizure, which had recently been repeated, perhaps accelerated by the shock his spirits had sustained. Some degree of amendment had been experienced; but his state was still precarious, and permanent recovery was not to be expected. His Lady also, who had long suffered from nervous depression, was now so much worse

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than usual, that strong apprehensions were entertained of incipient derangement.

The full extent of these calamities was not, of course, communicated to the scarcely convalescent youth. He heard, however, enough to awaken in him distressing feelings of alarm and self-reproach, as to the share which he might have had in occasioning them. He sometimes burst forth in an agony of spirit, bewailing his circumstances, or cursing his own folly.

"Poor gentleman!" thought his humble attendant, "indeed it is not in riches and grandeur to make people happy! Misfortunes belong to the great as well as to the poor, and sin and folly bring misery to all. O that he knew the sweetness of this precious Bible, and the comfort it affords even to those who suffer from the effects of their own sin!"

Many a silent prayer ascended that his affliction might be sanctified and his mind soothed; and sometimes a modest hint was dropped tending to direct his views

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to the only source of true consolation. More than once, when the nurse laid down her Bible, the gentleman took it up, and looked at it, at one time observing, "It might have been better for me, had I attended more to this book."

"True, Sir," replied the simple-hearted woman, "for 'wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.' But, Sir, it is not too late: for the Lord is rich in mercy to all that call upon Him."

On another occasion, having for a few moments dipped into the narrative of Bunyan, he closed the book, saying, "I cannot imagine how it is that you are so happy with your books, they would drive me to despair."

"Ah, Sir," replied the nurse, "I was almost driven to despair before I took to them; but they taught me to look to the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, even as great sinners as I am."

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"Surely, my good friend, you cannot have been a very great sinner. Your humble happy lot must have screened you from the temptations attendant on greatness, and your native good disposition would render easy your performance of your duty, both to your Maker and your fellow-creatures."

"Perhaps, Sir, if I may make bold to say so, we are all too apt to think the circumstances of others more favourable than our own; but, 'the heart knoweth its own bitterness.' Poverty has its snares as well as greatness. No doubt you have had your temptations and trials, and I have had mine. I will not trouble you with them; but the grace of God is sufficient for us both."

Such conversations repeatedly occurred, and were generally succeeded by long and pensive silence, each party apparently musing on their own experience.

The recovery of the patient progressed so far, that it was proposed shortly to at-

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tempt his removal. The nurse also calculated that her services would then be dispensed with, and expected to return to her family. She observed with surprise and concern, that the prospect of returning home seemed much less delightful to the young nobleman than to herself.

After a visit from the surgeons, when the time and manner of his Lordship's removal was arranged, he expressed his gratitude for the unceasing attentions of his humble companion, the value of which he justly considered beyond all pecuniary recompence; and yet hoped that some occasion might arise of testifying his remembrance by serving her or her family. "But," he added, "you already possess far more happiness than it is in my power to confer, or indeed than has ever fallen to my lot to enjoy. You go home to an affectionate family, to express and act upon the real feelings of your heart. Happy should I be to go to a cottage home where I might enjoy the like freedom; but I am

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born to a lot of splendid wretchedness. In a few weeks I shall come of age. Hundreds of people, high and low, will be assembled to celebrate the event; but to me it will be no joy. If I could believe, as you do, that there is grace abounding to the chief of sinners, and that I should not have to reap in another world the consequences of my crimes in this, I would far rather have expired on that bed where you found me!"

"O, Sir, do not say so: grace does indeed abound; but not to those who die without repentance. Be thankful that you are spared to repent and pray, and who can tell but you may be made a great blessing in the world? if so, you will be happy."

"No! never! never! never can I be happy. I have not peace in my family. When you return home, you perhaps go to a cottage of peace and affection; but I go to a mansion of hatred and strife, and, as I just read in your Bible, 'Better is a

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dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox, and hatred therewith.' I have, indeed, a kind and indulgent father, and a fond but overbearing mother, and all their hopes and expectations are centred in me; yet they make themselves and the object of their solicitude wretched, by contentions as to his settlement in life. My mother is resolved on marrying me to a niece of hers, whom I can never love. My affections have been long fixed on an amiable girl, a relation of our family, whose only fault is want of rank and fortune. These I have to confer, and do not need to seek. My father might be induced to yield to the wishes of my heart, and wave these particulars; but my mother is inexorable, and declares she will never see me again if I marry the girl of my choice. Nor is this all. A brother of the haughty designing creature whom my mother would force upon me, has basely calumniated the character of the object of my affections, in order to induce my poor father to

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withdraw his consent to our union. This originated the unhappy quarrel that has brought me to this place. It was my own cousin, who, with myself, mutually put our lives in jeopardy. Now tell me, what can all my possessions do to make me happy, if I must renounce the only being I can love, and connect myself with one whom I abhor, or encounter my mother's unrelenting displeasure and curse?"

"Indeed Sir, that is enough to make you unhappy, and nothing can make you otherwise except the peace of God which passes all understanding. May you but experience that, and then all things will work together for good, as we know they do to them that love God."

With such suggestions, the pious nurse took leave of her charge; and returned to her family, enriched by a recompence far more liberal than she had on any other occasion received, and with feelings of deep commiseration for one who, though surrounded with sources of enjoyment, yet

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drank so bitterly of the cup of vexation of spirit. Often did her recollections hover round his bed of anguish, when her prayers were continually ascending that his life might be spared, at least until he was made acquainted with the Saviour of sinners. Often did she renew in thought the conversation, when, sitting in his easy-chair, he took up her books, first perhaps to beguile the tedious moments of weakness, afterwards to ask some question as to her application of them, terminating perhaps with a sigh after a participation in that experience which could console and satisfy the mind under the various circumstances of human life; and often did she pray that some word of truth that had met either his eye or his ear, might be fixed in his heart as a nail in a sure place. She had, however, little expectation of ever seeing him again; for, to the last, his title and residence had never transpired: and, though he had informed himself of her abode, and expressed the

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hope that he might at some time or other promote her interests, or those of her family, she had little idea that when restored to health and gaiety she should ever be remembered by him.

Not more, however, than six months had elapsed, when a footman in elegant livery called at the residence of Mrs. Knowles, to enquire if she could attend immediately at the house of a noble family, where the old Lord was dying of a paralytic stroke, and the only son and heir sinking in rapid consumption.

Mrs. Knowles was from home, but was expected to return that day or the next; and her daughter, considering the opportunity too promising to be overlooked, immediately went in quest of her. She had been nursing, for the fourth or fifth time, one of the nieces of her old benefactor, Mr. Russell, who willingly expedited her departure to avail herself of the favourable opportunity.

A carriage immediately conveyed her

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to Grosvenor-Square. On alighting, she was conducted up the back stairs: a sudden trepidation seized her; for she instantly thought she recognised the entrance, the staircase, the balusters, which the one visit to her separated child had so indelibly impressed on her mind. But she checked the thought. It might be another house in the same square, and all the houses might be built alike. She, however, instinctively approached a door, which appeared to her the same at which she entered the nursery. But the servant who accompanied her, led her on through a gallery to another part of the house, where, in a sumptuous apartment, lay the dying nobleman. All consciousness had ceased from the moment of the seizure. The physicians sat by his bed-side directing such stimulating measures as are usually resorted to, but evidently without any expectation of success. His Lordship's valet was in attendance, and Mrs. Knowles promptly joined him in carry-

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ing into effect the directions of the medical gentlemen.

"Would it not be desirable, Dr. ——," whispered one of the physicians to the other, "to make her Ladyship acquainted with the state of the case?"

"Better not, better not," was the reply. "It will inevitably bring on one of the violent paroxysms, and will at best be wholly unavailing *here*."

"True—true: should the power of association produce any unlooked-for excitement, the effects would but be distressing to both parties. But, Lord ——? He, at least, is rational; and it would, perhaps, be better to apprize him of the truth: a very few hours must put him in possession ——"

"A very short-lived possession, I fear, Dr. ——"

"Yes, yes, it must be so: a fine young nobleman! a lamentable business that ——"

The last word was suppressed, or failed

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to reach the ear of the attendants. A few more sentences were exchanged between the doctors in a still lower voice, and with an expression of solemnity, enquiry, and mystery.

The conversation was broken off by a gentle tap at the chamber door. It was the valet of the young Lord, with anxious enquiries after the health of his suffering father, and earnest entreaties that he might be permitted to visit him.

"O, no, no," exclaimed the elder physician, "Lord ——— must by no means hazard the excitement of seeing his father in this state, nor the change of temperature in passing from room to room."

"How is his Lordship this morning?" asked the younger physician, "what night has he passed?"

"His Lordship," replied the valet, "has passed a much more tranquil night, with less cough, and appears better this morning. He is already up, in the hope of

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being permitted to see my Lord, about whom he is extremely anxious."

"The morning is peculiarly mild," observed the younger and more sympathizing physician. "Perhaps, if every precaution is adopted, his Lordship's wish might be safely complied with; (looking at his watch,) Dr. —— will be with us in a quarter of an hour."

The valet waited.

The physicians whispered—"Present our compliments to his Lordship, and inform him that my Lord is not worse. We shall wait on his Lordship as soon as Dr. —— arrives."

A thundering rap soon announced the arrival of the third physician, already in attendance on the young Lord. His brethren of the faculty met him in the drawing-room, leaving the dying father in the charge of the valet and nurse.

"A melancholy house, this," observed the former, "the old Lord just passing away; my Lady almost frantic; and the

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young Lord, who only came of age the twenty-third of last October, just as he is coming into all the wealth and honour, wasting away like a blighted plant."

"Came of age the twenty-third of last October?" exclaimed the nurse,—for the date confirmed her suspicion; it was on that day she had given birth to her separated son. "Poor young gentleman! and what is his complaint? Is there no hope of his recovery?"

"I fear not: the physicians have tried all manner of remedies, but quite in vain. They don't seem even to understand the complaint. 'Tis what we hardly dare speak of, but, from my Lady's ravings when she is at the worst, it seems as if she had crossed him in love. She threatens and declares that if he does not consent to keep the estates in her family, she will disinherit him. That, you know, proves her to be out of her senses, as it is quite out of her power to do it. What is his by birth cannot be taken away by whim;

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and I am sure no one can blame the young Lord for refusing to marry his cousin, whom he cannot love. On his birthday, when it was expected he would have opened the ball with her, he was taken very ill, and has continued so ever since. It was thought that he had taken some poison, but not enough to do the deed: but this cannot be true, or he would have got well before this time. However, he is very closely watched, and so is the old Lady, for she seems bent on doing herself a mischief. But as he will now (without a doubt) be his own master, his Lordship, of course, will please himself, and then, perhaps, he may recover his health; but I fear it is too late. He had had a bad illness before, away from home, and had hardly recovered his strength from that, when this new attack came on."

Little thought the faithful valet with what intense and agitating interest his tale was listened to by the nurse. "Was she indeed in the house with her own child?

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her dying child? and should she quit it without identifying him? without seeing him? or were her services to be transferred to him, when his father should cease to require them. (The servant who engaged her, had mentioned the illness of both.) And how had she been found out? was it purely accidental? or had the old Lady traced her movements, and on this occasion sought her aid? That was not likely, for she was kept in ignorance of her Lord's seizure; besides, in all probability she would rather have avoided her; and the young Lord would have no consciousness of interest in her. Should she get a sight of the Lady? and should she gain access to the room? Either of these, she thought, neither lapse of time, nor alteration in anything extrinsic, could prevent her identifying."

All these thoughts passed her mind in rapid succession. Her agitated musings were broken off by the entrance of the physicians, accompanied by the young

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Lord muffled up and supported by his valet. The physicians had yielded to his pressing entreaties, and consented that he should look upon his dying father.

As he dropped the hood that had covered his face to prevent his inhaling the fresh air in passing from room to room, Mrs. Knowles instantly recognised the object of her former solicitude and attention—the young duellist! The first thought that darted across her mind was the enquiry, "Is he my own son?" The next, that of surprise at the fearful alteration in his appearance. She left him apparently progressing to health. She saw him evidently sinking into the grave.

Each attendant, of course, made way for the approach of the physicians and the noble heir, and withdrew to the ante-room. Thus an opportunity was afforded to the nurse to make a momentary effort to suppress and tranquilize her feelings.

The respite was short, for almost immediately the bell rang, and her services

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were required in the sick-room. The young nobleman held the hand of his dying father, and fancied that a slight pressure indicated a degree of consciousness. At his request the physicians made an attempt to administer a cordial, but the power of swallowing was gone.

"Ah, my faithful nurse," said the young Lord, as she stood beside him, "I remembered your kind attentions to me, and as soon as I knew of the alarming illness of my honoured father, I ordered them to send for you. My poor father will not long require your good offices, and then they shall be transferred to me—for a little while, not long ——"

"God grant your Lordship, if it be his blessed will, restoration to health, long life, and enjoyment." It was feebly uttered; for his hollow jaw, long, thin, bony fingers, and clammy touch, told her that no long continuance of earthly enjoyments awaited him.

While he remained in the room she

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gazed on him with intense interest, as if to descry in the lines of his countenance the secret of his birth, and she fancied she traced a resemblance to her husband and to her daughters: the fashion of the day covered with a flowing periwig his natural hair whatever its colour might be, or there she thought she should have found unequivocal confirmation of her surmises.

The physicians soon urged his Lordship's return to his apartment: his own valet was summoned to attend him. He gave one more affectionate look at his parent, and withdrew.

It was not long after his departure that a change was perceptible in the dying nobleman. A few struggles ensued, and all was over.

It then became necessary that her Ladyship should be made acquainted with the event. On account of her state of extreme nervous excitability, the physicians had been anxious to keep her in igno-

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rance, while a possibility remained of her violence disturbing the last moments of her Lord. But they now withdrew from the chamber of death, and, with the assistance of her favourite woman, gradually broke to her the seizure,—its alarming character,—its fatal issue.

To their great surprise, she received it with unwonted composure, and appeared immediately to be engrossed in concern about her son. It was, however, not so much the trembling tender concern of an anxious mother for the life of a beloved child, as the eagerness of a determined schemer to push a moment of advantage. She gave immediate orders that an express should be sent to convey to her sister's family the mournful intelligence, and to desire the company and condolence of her favourite niece.

No sooner was the messenger dispatched, and the physicians had taken their leave, than the dowager Lady hastened to the apartment of her son, to condole with

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and congratulate him; perhaps, also, to persecute him by the introduction of her one topic—that which had ever been the theme of bitter contention—that on which his Lordship might justly suppose both his independent circumstances and his state of health ought to shield him from importunity, but which his mother seemed determined to press with fresh vehemence, actuated by the base consideration that if he should die without issue, the honours and estates would pass to a distant branch of the late Lord's family, against whom she entertained a violent antipathy, but on a member of which her son had fixed a virtuous affection. His marriage, therefore, into the family would defeat her schemes both of ambition and malice. Her heart was set both on preventing the property from entering into that family, and on securing it to her own; and could she have been assured that a union with the object of his choice would call back her only, her darling son from the borders of the

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grave, she would rather sacrifice him than relinquish her base and malignant purpose.

But his Lordship was too deeply affected by his bereavement, and too keenly alive to his own situation, to be in a state either for receiving congratulations or entering into projects. His grief was deep and real. To joy and hope of a worldly kind he was a stranger. He tenderly embraced his mother, and seemed to wish that all should pass into quiet oblivion, save the memory of his father, and the solemnities of his own prospects. The only desire he expressed, was that he might be permitted to look upon the lifeless remains of his father, and that, before they were disguised with the solemn pageantry of the undertaker. Her Ladyship also declared her intention of visiting the noble corpse, and the valet was sent to order that the chamber should be prepared for their admission, as the visit was to be expedited before the chill of evening should come on.

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Again his Lordship was muffled up and conducted on the arm of the valet, her Ladyship leaning on that of her woman. At the entrance of the darkened room, stood the valet of the late Lord, and his nurse, each holding a wax candle.

No sooner did the eyes of the Lady meet those of the attendant, than she screamed as though she had seen a spectre, and fell into all the agitations of delirium. This scene was not new to the servants: they had witnessed several such paroxysms, though none so fearful as the present. The incoherent ravings which caught the nurse's ear were such as confirmed her suspicions, and, perhaps, were more intelligible to her than to any other person; and the countenance, though apparently marked with more than the ravages of one or two and twenty years, she felt sure was that of her smiling tempter.

The old Lady was with difficulty carried back to her own apartment, and placed under the care of her physicians. Her

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ravings were most fearful, and long continued. The aggravation of her malady, however, was ascribed to the sudden shock of her Lord's death, and excited little wonder. She never recovered, either to welcome her niece, or further to persecute the dying victim of her artifices. After remaining several years a confirmed maniac, forgotten by society, the death of the Dowager Countess of —— was announced in the public papers, and just called to remembrance the fact that such an individual had existed.

The young Lord, painfully agitated at the melancholy condition of her Ladyship, and far too weak to render her any assistance, tremulously, but placidly, approached the bed of his father, pressed his stiffening hand, stroked his pallid features, sobbed out, "Farewell, kindest of parents, we shall not be long separated!" and, after gazing upon him a moment or two, silently withdrew.

He seemed to need support on each

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side, and the nurse instinctively offered her assistance. She knew not the direction of his Lordship's apartment, but following the bearing of her companions she found herself at the door of that which on the preceding day she had so earnestly desired to enter. It was the ante-room to that of his Lordship, and they merely passed through it; but even that momentary glance at once convinced her that she was in possession of the only remaining proof required to establish in her mind a conviction of the identity of the spot and of the family. She felt sure that her attentions were now directed to her *own, dying* child—and from that day she became his constant attendant.

Much did she desire to ascertain a few corroborating circumstances, which, although she could not doubt, would add confirmation to her conviction. Excepting the personal valet of the late Lord, there was not an old servant in the establishment. From him, however, she

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learned that her Ladyship had been long married without the hope of an heir, and that great joy was occasioned by the birth of the present Lord, whose birth, however, was said to be premature, and took place during the absence of his Lordship, and so suddenly and unexpectedly that there was no time to summon proper attendants. However, to the great joy of his Lordship, his Lady and son both did well,—and,—until crossed in love by the Lady his mother, the young nobleman had been perfectly healthy.

All this information was easily and naturally elicited by enquiries into the origin of his illness, his previous health, and natural constitution; nor was there any difficulty in finding out that the apartment in question was, during the childhood of his Lordship, used as the nursery, and re-fitted up for his reception on his return from Eton.

When the turmoil of her feelings on the discovery of these circumstances had some-

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what subsided, two grand objects engaged the mind of the mother: first, the preparation of the immortal spirit of her child for that unchanging state on which it must so soon enter; and next, her own duty as to divulging the secret of his birth. In respect of the first and most important, she had great and growing satisfaction that the enquiries awakened during his former sufferings, had led him to a serious and self-appropriating perusal of the word of God; and his desire to be again attended by his "faithful nurse" (as he always called her) arose, not simply from a preference for her administration to his bodily comforts, but chiefly from a desire to have some one at hand with whom he could converse on the feelings of his mind, his hopes, and his prospects. As to the other, she gradually came to the conclusion that she might safely let it rest in her own bosom. Although she had in her own mind a moral certainty of the fact, she had no means of proving it to others, and m

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be suspected of inventing an artful story from interested motives. The principal in the scheme of imposition was not in a state that the discovery could either tend to the conviction of her guilt or the clearing of her conscience. She was actually in a state of confirmed derangement, and her confessions, or her contradictions, would alike be regarded as the ravings of insanity. The unconscious subject of the fraud was in circumstances which afforded too full a security that he could not long retain possession of that to which he had no just claim, and at his death it must devolve immediately to the right heir. It would be cruel needlessly to harass and distract his last hours with the unravelling of a scheme in which he had no guilty participation, and in which proof was so inaccessible. In a word, it appeared that no one could be injured by suppressing, nor any one benefited by divulging, the secret. It was therefore consigned to undisturbed repose.

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The supposed nobleman lingered about a month. The only instance in which he availed himself of his newly-acquired authority, was that of inviting to the mansion the family who would so soon become its possessors; the family in which his tenderest affections were centred, but against which such bitter hatred had been cherished by his supposed mother. She was no longer in a state for her feelings to be wounded by their admittance; and, indulging the hope that her present unhappy condition accounted for her former undeserved antipathy, her son felt himself at liberty, and even bound in honour and justice, to gratify his own feelings by an avowed reconciliation between the families. His wishes in this respect fulfilled, he quietly took leave of his worldly interests, and fixed his contemplations on eternity, expressing a humble confidence in Him who came to save the chief of sinners; and died—though he knew it not—in the arms of his own mother.

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The "faithful nurse," in addition to a liberal and ample reward of her services befitting the rank and wealth of the family, was furnished with handsome mourning, and never wore any other dress to the end of her days.

Reader,—this simple tale will not have been told in vain, if it shall impress on any mind the conviction that happiness consists not in the fulfilment of our wishes, but in the rectitude of our designs, and in the pious acquiescence of our wills. Success is God's blessing upon a good cause; his curse upon a bad one.

THE END.

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